JAMES SHIRLEY:

HIS CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF LETTERS OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF ITS REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

REV. STEPHEN J. RADTKE, O.S.B., A.B., M.A., L.H.M.,
of St. Bernard's Abbey,
St. Bernard, Ala.

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
WASHINGTON, D. C.
1929

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JAMES SHIRLEY, DRAMATIST.

"From a portrait in the Bodleian Library where it is said to have been since 1679."

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OF ST. BERNARD, ALA.,

THIS WORK IS

DEDICATED

WITH ESTEEM AND FRATERNAL LOVE

FOREWORD.

To bring before the students of English literature the Catholic Philosophy of Life as revealed in the works of James Shirley, the dramatist, is the task I have assumed in this dissertation. A great deal has been written in the past on "the last of the Elizabethans," [1] as Shirley is generally designated by the historians of literature. At first he was considered merely as an imitator of Fletcher, or as a Jonsonian contributor to the comedy of manners. This erroneous opinion, however, has been gradually dispelled by the able researches of scholars who, from time to time, have examined more deeply into his literary merits, so that he has now assumed his rightful place as the principal dramatic poet of the reign of Charles I. His work in the drama, as will be shown in this work, is unique in the period to which he belongs; in form it belongs to the Elizabethan period, but in content it brings us "almost within sight of those witty and kindly observers of men and manners, Goldsmith and Addison." [2]

It is, however, principally with Shirley's Catholicity that this dissertation is concerned. This phase in the study of Shirley has never been attempted heretofore. Biographers invariably have referred to his conversion to the Catholic faith in a few brief words, or have omitted mention of the fact entirely. Specifically, this dissertation does not pretend to reveal any new or startling events in Shirley's life, nor does it profess to enunciate any novel aesthetic appreciation of his dramas. Only in so far as an event or a drama may have a bearing upon his Catholic Philosophy of Life have these been emphasized.

In order, therefore, to appreciate fully the important part

[1] Nason, *James Shirley, Dramatist*, p. 3.

[2] Jusserand, *A Literary History of the English People*, III, p. 863.

the Catholic religion had on the works of Shirley, it will be necessary to review briefly the period in which he lived, to consider the political aspects, the religious influences that set the standard of morality of the time, to inquire into the motives that must have actuated Shirley's conversion to Catholicism, and the influences that brought about this remarkable event.

It has been my intention, furthermore, to exclude all controversial features regarding the doctrines of the Catholic Church on the religious principles of morality inculcated in Shirley's works. In doctrine these deal principally with the "divine right of kings," marriage and confession. The former, the "divine right of kings," was a much-discussed topic of the time, and had its adherents and opponents alike in the ranks of Catholic theologians. The doctrines on marriage and confession, however, as inculcated by Shirley, are peculiar to the Catholic Church. The other religious practices that I have referred to are not peculiarly Catholic; they are more or less common to all Christians, but they are in conformity with the teachings of the Catholic Church, and bespeak Shirley's Catholic Philosophy of Life.

As regards the historical data of the period I have based my study principally upon Green's *Short History of the English People,* and upon Jusserand's *Literary History of the English People.* Wood's *Athenae Oxonienses,* and the Gifford-Dyce edition of Shirley's works have been the basis of my study regarding Shirley's life. These have been supplemented by the recent works of A. H. Nason, *James Shirley, Dramatist,* R. S. Forsythe, *Shirley's Plays and the Elizabethan Drama,* and J. Schipper, *James Shirley, Sein Leben und Seine Werke,* and the researches of R. H. Baugh, published in the *Modern Language Review.*

I take this opportunity of extending my deepest appreciation to Arthur Deering, M. A., of the Catholic University, who suggested the subject and under whose enthusiastic inspiration the work was completed. I also wish to express my gratitude to

Professor P. J. Lennox, Litt. D., and to Rev. James M. Campbell, Ph. D., of the same institution, who read the manuscript and offered valuable suggestions and corrections. My gratitude is also due to the late Rt. Rev. Abbot Ramsay, O. S. B., of Downside Abbey, England, for valuable information regarding St. Alban's Abbey; to Mr. John Johnson, of the Oxford University Press, England, for data concerning the Shirley portrait in the Bodleian Library at Oxford; and to Professor Felix E. Schelling, of the University of Pennsylvania, for timely suggestions regarding recent bibliography on Shirley's work.

THE AUTHOR.

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CHAPTER I.

Shirliana, 1675–1922.

Outline.—First mention of Shirley in the *Theatrum Poetarum*—*The Athenae Oxonienses,* main source of information—unfavorable criticism by Dryden, Gould and Oldham—Dibdin's *Complete History of the Stage*—Langbaine's *Account*—Shiels's *Lives,* a paraphrase of Wood—Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare*—Malone's *History*—Lamb's *Specimens*—K. Q. X. in *The London Magazine*—*The Gentlemans' Magazine*—the Gifford-Dyce *Collection* of Shirley's Works—Shirley in *The American Quarterly Review*—Kingsley's *Plays and Puritans*—Swinburne's *Essay*—Stiefel and Nissen on the Spanish sources—*The Dictionary of National Biography*—Professor Schelling's *Elizabethan Drama*—Schipper's German translation of *The Royal Master*—The *Cambridge History of English Literature*—Forsythe's *Relations*—Nason's biographical and critical study—Eglinton's *St. Patrick for Ireland*—Baugh's *Some New Facts about Shirley.*

The life and works of James Shirley are well known to the special students of English literature. A dissertation, therefore, such as this, which purposes to deal with a subject already rather familiar, should not trespass on what has been accomplished heretofore. It is equally necessary to know just how much has been done, what fields of research have been explored and what problems of study have been solved. I shall therefore devote this chapter in giving a brief review of the main sources of information of our knowledge concerning James Shirley, the dramatist. Some of the historical documents, such as the *Register Booke* of St. Giles Parish, London, the *Register* of St. Mary's Woolchurch, mentioned by Nason,[1] and the *Parish Registers of St. Albans Abbey,* 1558-1689, and the *Historical Records of St. Albans,* cited by Baugh,[2] I have been unable to

[1] *James Shirley, Dramatist,* pp. 445-446.

[2] "Some New Facts about Shirley," *Modern Language Review* (July, 1922), pp. 228 ff.

examine personally. Such sources, however, which I have discovered and which were overlooked in the past I shall especially mention and quote from them pertinent paragraphs. I have also refrained from including into this Chapter of " Shirliana " the brief account of Shirley that one meets in the smaller histories of literature, for these are invariably based on the larger and more extensive sources, and present nothing new. This Chapter thus gives us a composite nucleus of all that has been written about Shirley, from the seventeenth century down to the present time.

The first mention of James Shirley as a dramatist is in *The Theatrum Poetarum, or A Compleat Collection of the Poets, Especially the most Emminent of All Ages.* This work was compiled by Edward Phillips, a nephew of John Milton, and appeared in 1675, nine years after Shirley's death. In general, the reference to Shirley is rather favorable, and mentions him as " a just pretender to more than the meanest place among the English Poets, but most especially for dramatic Poesy," and states that " by some he is accounted little inferior to Fletcher himself." [3]

Anthony à Wood (1632-1695) was an enthusiastic antiquarian, a kind of prototype to Sir Walter Scott of the Romantic period. He spent most of his life at Oxford University. History, heraldry, genealogies, and music occupied most of his time. In 1669 he had written his *History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford.* This was translated into Latin by the University authorities, much to the dissatisfaction of the original author. Wood therefore wrote a fresh English copy which appeared in 1786, compiled from his manuscripts. This great work is the *Athenae Oxonienses: an exact History of all the Writers and Bishops who have had their Education in the University of Oxford, to which are added the Fasti or Annals of the said University (1691-92).*[4] The work extends from the

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 80.
[4] Cf. pp. 260-262 for the account of Shirley.

year 1500-1690. It has been used by all subsequent biographers and in general forms the basis of our knowledge concerning Shirley.

A second edition, with numerous additions and a continuation by Philip Bliss, fellow of St. John's College, appeared in 1817.[5] Valuable and indispensable as this work really is, it was written about fifty years after Shirley's death, and contains quite a number of errors which have been brought to light by Professor Nason.[6] These errors have been carelessly copied by the later biographers, who seemed to take little pains to verify the facts.

Shirley's reputation as a dramatist grew gradually. In fact the first few notices appearing after *The Theatrum Poetarum* and the *Athenae Oxonienses* were anything but flattering. In 1692, sixteen years after his death, Dryden (1631-1700) published his *MacFlecknoe*. The slurring reference to our author contained in the lines of MacFlecknoe to Shadwell has done much to tarnish Shirley's literary reputation. Dryden, at the time the literary authority of England, gives an unjust estimate of Shirley. This had no slight influence on the public mind.[7]

Another poet of the time, Robert Gould, also referred to Shirley in a rather contemptuous manner, showing in what gen-

[5] Cf. III, pp. 737-744, for the account of Shirley.

[6] Cf. Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 6 ff.

[7] "Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology.
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare the way.
. . . . . .
No Persian carpets spread the imperial way,
But scattered limbs of mangled poets lay;
From dusty shops neglected authors come
Martyrs of pies . . . . .
Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby there lay
But loads of Shadwell almost choked the way."
—Globe ed. pp. 144; II. 24-33; 98-103.

èral disregard our author was held by the contemporaries of Dryden.[8]

A third reference, of similar disparaging nature, is contained in a poem published with the works of John Oldham (1653-1683) in 1698. The poem in question is entitled *A Satyr* and mentions Shirley in the following lines:

> How many Poems writ in ancient time,
> Which thy Fore-fathers had in great esteem,
> Which in the crowded Shops bore any rate,
> And sold like News-Books, and affairs of State,
> Have grown contemptible, and slighter since,
> As *Prodage, Fleckno,* or the *British Prince?*
> . . . . . .
> And so may'st thou perchance pass up and down,
> And please a while, th' admiring Court and Town
> Who after shalt in *Duck-lane* Shops be thrown,
> To mould with *Silvester* and *Shirley* there,
> And truck for poets of Ale next *Stourbridge-Fair.*[9]

Still another unfavorable comment on Shirley and his work is found in *A Complete History of the Stage,* by Charles Dibdin (1745-1814). It was probably written between the years 1795 and 1800. Concerning *The Doubtful Heir* and *The Impositor* [sic] the author remarks "you always pity him for making Fletcher his model." [10]

But there were other writers in these years who judged Shir-

[8] "Think, ye vain scribbling tribe of Shirley's fate,
You that write farce, and you that farce translate;
Shirley, the scandal of the ancient stage,
Shirley, the very Durfey of his age;
Think how he lies in Ducklane shops forlorn,
And never mention'd but with utmost scorn;
Think that the end of your boasted skill,
As I presume to prophecy it will
Justly—for many of you write as ill."
—*The Play House, A Satire, Works,* II, p. 246.

[9] Oldham, *A Satyr,* Book, III, p. 163.

[10] Cf. Vol IV, pp. 44-45.

ley more justly and gave him more credit for his merits as a playwright. *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets,* by Gerard Langbaine, 1691, considers Shirley "of such incomparable parts that he was the chief of the Second-rate Poets." This is the first instance we have in which each of Shirley's plays receives definite notice; a paragraph is devoted to each. "Of these," says Langbaine, "I have seen four since my Remembrance, two of which were acts at the King's House; and the other two presented at the Duke's Theatre, in Little Lincolns-Inn Fields., viz: *Court Secret, Chances* [probably *Changes*], *Grateful Servant, School of Compliments* [sic]. He concludes the account by quoting four lines from Hall:

> Yet this I dare assert, when Men have nam'd
> Jonson (the Nation's Laureat) the fam'd
> Beaumont, and Fletcher, he, that cannot see
> Shirley, the fourth, must forfeit his best Eye. [11]

Eight years later, 1699, Langbaine's book was revised by Charles Gildon (1665-1724). The concluding line of the title-page states that it was "first begun by Mr. Langbain, improv'd and continued down to this time, by a Careful Hand." The account of Shirley was revised and considerably condensed. Its general tone was changed, and may have been thus influenced by the slurring lines of Dryden in *MacFlecknoe* referred to above. "Mr. Langbaine," we read, "gives him [Shirley] no small Praise, and indeed he does to most of the indifferent Poets, so that shou'd a stranger to our Poets read him, [Shirley] they wou'd make an odd Collection of our English Writers, for they wou'd be sure to take Heywood, Shirley, etc., and leave Dryden." [12]

The first appearance of any of Shirley's plays in the form of a collection or anthology appeared in *A Select Collection of Old Plays,* compiled by Robert Dodsley (1703-1764). The

[11] Cf. pp. 474-485 for the account of Shirley.
[12] Cf. the Gildon edition, Vol. IV. pp. 44-45.

work appeared in twelve volumes, and contained three of Shirley's plays, namely: *The Gamester,*[13] *The Bird in a Cage,*[14] and *Love Will find out the Way, An Excellent Comedy, by J. B.* [sic].[15] A fourth, *Andromana; or, The Merchant's Wife, by J. S.,*[16] was ascribed to him principally on account of the initials, *J. S.* A second edition of this *Collection* appeared in 1780. This contained the first two plays mentioned above, and a brief sketch of Shirley's life based on the Wood *Account.* A third edition, 1825, omits the Shirley plays entirely, in anticipation of the Gifford-Dyce collection which appeared a few years later. This third edition was edited by J. P. Collier.

The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland, by Robert Shiels, in 1753, which has been wrongly ascribed to Theophilus Cibber, contains a delightfully imaginative paraphrase of Wood's biographical sketch of Shirley. A noteworthy example of the style of this work is the exaggerated account of Archbishop Laud's prohibition of permitting Shirley's ordination as an Anglican clergyman on account of the mole on his left cheek.[17]

The literary reputation of James Shirley would surely have gradually drifted into oblivion had it not been rescued from such a fate by the appreciative genius of Richard Farmer (1735-1797). In 1767 appeared his *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare,* and incorporates a citation from *The Brothers,* which, according to Dyce and others, "may be regarded as one of the earliest attempts to rescue the works of Shirley from the long oblivion to which they had been consigned."[18] Farmer's words, showing the reaction to Dryden's estimate of Shirley, are worth quoting: "Shirley is spoken of with contempt in

[13] Vol. IX, pp. 97-178.
[14] *Ibid.* pp. 179-252.
[15] Vol. XII, pp. 95-170.
[16] Vol. XI, pp. 171-241.
[17] Cf. Vol. II, pp. 26-32.
[18] Cf. Dyce, *Works,* xi.

MacFlecknoe; but his imagination is sometimes fine to an extraordinary degree." [19]

In the year 1790 appeared the *History of the English Stage,* by Edmond Malone. This work is important to the student of Shirley, for it contains the summaries and extracts from the lost office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of Revels during Shirley's time. A second edition of this interesting account of the stage appeared in 1821.

The Specimens of English Dramatic Poets of the Shakespearean era, compiled and collected by Charles Lamb (1775-1834), appeared in 1808. A note prefixed to the selections from Shirley states that our author "claims a place amongst the worthies of this period, not so much for any transcendent genius in himself, as that he was the last of a great race, all of whom spoke nearly the same language, and had a set of moral feelings and notions in common." *The Specimens* further contain excerpts from *Chabot,* pp. 382-387, written in collaboration with George Chapman; *The Maid's Revenge,* pp. 387-396; *The Politician,* pp. 396-399; *The Brothers,* pp. 399-405, and *The Lady of Pleasure,* pp. 405-408.

Another collection of biographies that contains a brief reference to James Shirley is the *Biographia Dramatica; or a Companion to the Playhouse.* It was originally compiled by D. E.

[19] As an example of the extraordinary poetic beauty which Shirley at times attains, Farmer quotes the following lines taken from *The Brothers,* (Act. I, scene 1):

> "Her eye did seem to labour with a tear
> Which suddenly took birth, but, overweigh'd
> With its own swelling, dropp'd upon her bosom,
> Which, by reflexion of her light, appear'd
> As nature meant her sorrow for an ornament;
> After, her looks grew cheerful, and I saw
> A Smile shoot graceful upward from her eyes,
> As if they had gain'd a victory o'er grief.
> And with it many beams twisted themselves,
> Upon whose golden threads the angels walk
> To and again from heaven."

Baker, in the year 1764, and continued by Isaac Reed and Stephen Jones. It brought out nothing new, neither from a biographical nor from a critical standpoint, that had not been mentioned by former biographers, especially by Wood, Phillips and Farmer.[20]

One of the first magazines to notice Shirley in an extensive article was the *London Magazine* of 1820. It seems strange that Nason and Forsythe, who have done so much work in the study of Shirley, should have entirely omitted this important contribution to the Shirlian literature from their bibliographies.

In this article, entitled *On the Character and Writings of James Shirley,* the author, who signs himself *K. Q. X.,* has given a picture of Shirley's character that has hitherto been unnoticed. A circumstance that prompted the writing of the article, the author tells us, was " the frequently announced edition of his [Shirley's] plays and poems by Mr. Gifford." " We do not recollect," the writer says, " any instance in the course of his writings where Shirley speaks of himself, or of his own character and feelings, with the exception of a few passages in the dedication of some of his later plays; there he indulges in a murmur, scarcely amounting to a complaint, against the Puritans, who almost deprived him of the means ' whereby he poorly lived.' [21] He never breaks out into anything like rancorous invective . . . this is to be attributed to his own natural gentleness and mildness of disposition, which is conspicuous through his works. It seems that the Puritans (in the words of Molière in his *Critique* on the *Ecole des Femmes*) had *des lumières pour les ordures,* which others did not possess, and they were often *plus chastes des oreilles que de tout le reste du corps.* For this hypocrisy they were frequently severely attacked by poets, both on and off the stage; but though Shirley owed most of the disappointments of his life to the Puri-

[20] Cf. pp. 666-668 for the sketch of Shirley.

[21] Cf. *Letter to Walter Moyle, Esq.,* prefixed to *The Politician, Works,* Vol. V., p. 91.

tans, he never introduces a character, a sentence, or a line into his plays or poems in which they are either ridiculed or censured . . . his amiable and affectionate temper might merit for him the epithet of " gentle " so beautifully applied to Shakespeare."

Regarding the coarseness and immorality of the dramas so prevalent at that period, the writer continues: " With trifling exceptions (not so considerable even as those of Massinger) he has left no traces of that grossness which has disfigured most of the dramatic productions of his time. Some have justified these blemishes as the custom and fashion of the day; but, without going out of our way to excuse them, it may be fairly said, that the indelicacy of the plays written before the closing of the theatres was at all events anything but seductive: it was intended merely as a joke, and with the joke its effect ended: after the Restoration, however, indecency was employed as an incentive, and it was rendered palatable by an odious ingenuity; sometimes, indeed, it had a thin, semitransparent covering, but it was only *il vel sottile e rado* which separated Ruggiero from Alcina, and gave fresh intenseness to the flame of his passions. Such is the great distinction between the grossness of our plays based upon the old English and that of those upon the new French model, such as it was introduced with Charles II." [22]

A very important book of reference for the student of the Restoration drama was issued in 1832 in ten volumes. It was entitled *Some Account of the English Stage, from the Restoration in 1660 to 1832,* and was due to the " great labour and research " of Rev. John Genest. It gave quite an impetus to the Shirlian revival. It contained brief abstracts of the plots of Shirley's plays, together with the dates of printing, and other useful technical information, " which forms the basis of the most exact knowledge concerning the stage."

[22] Cf. *The London Magazine,* Vol. I. (May, 1820), pp. 525 ff.; Vol. II. (Oct. 1820), pp. 415 ff.

Another interesting magazine article concerning the merits of Shirley as a dramatist is to be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine* [London] of 1880. The May issue of that year contains an excellent article, biographical as well as critical. Its author, G. Barnett Smith, repudiates the charge made by the earlier writers that Shirley is "but the follower and close imitator of his immediate predecessors." The essay then continues: "We do not see why his [Shirley's] laurels in tragedy should be regarded as being filched from Webster, or his laurels in comedy from Fletcher. Had he written precisely contemporaneously with him, his fame would now have been greater. He suffered by comparison with those who had already enraptured the world by their dazzling lustre, and he was charged with having lit the flame of his own genius at their shrine." [23]

A little earlier, Smith mentions Shirley's conversion to the Catholic religion. "There is a fine touch of conscientiousness in Shirley," he states; "he changed his religion from no interested motives; indeed, it would have been to his worldly interests to have stifled his convictions; so that, however we may regard the faith which he adopted, we must at least do him the justice to admit that he firmly adhered to it through dark and evil days." [24]

The complete set of Shirley's works, lyrical and dramatic, appeared in 1883 in six volumes. The work was originally commenced by William Gifford (1756-1826) and continued by Rev. Alexander Dyce. To the first volume Dyce prefixed a brief sketch of Shirley's life, together with a short account of each of the dramas. The biographical sketch is based on Wood's *Account,* on Malone's records of Henry Herbert's office book, the register and records of the Merchant-Taylors' School, and on the registry of the church of St. Giles in the Fields, where Shirley was buried. This is the most reliable source of information regarding our author's life and dramatic activity.

[23] Cf. p. 610.
[24] *London Magazine* (May, 1880), p. 586.

A very able review of the edition appeared in the April-July issue of the *Quarterly Review,* 1833. It is remarkable for the picture of the times the writer gives, together with a brief review of Shirley's life. The writer also quotes passages from *The Traitor, The Cardinal, The Brothers,* and *The Lady of Pleasure.*[25]

The work was also reviewed in the following year by an unknown writer in the *American Quarterly Review* of 1834. The reviewer, influenced to a great extent by New England Puritanism, seems to take little consideration of the time in which Shirley wrote; he seems to forget that the standard of morality was entirely different in that time, for he appears rather surprised that a drama like *The Maid's Revenge* should be the work of a clergyman, and that " a Reverend personage should have been the instrument of ushering it into public notice . . . few, if any, of the pieces contained in these volumes are such as may be considered to be perfectly in keeping with the clerical gown." [26]

A very valuable contribution to Shirlian literature appeared in 1855. The artitcle was entitled " Who was Henry Shirley?" It was by E. P. Shirley, a namesake of our author. This writer endeavors to solve the identity of one *Henry Shirley,* who is known as the author of *The Martyred Soldier.*[27]

The Gifford-Dyce edition contains thirty of Shirley's plays, *Chabot* written in collaboration with Chapman, eight masques and other " moral pieces," as Shirley himself styles them, and his poems. These were considered the only works written by Shirley. The same year, 1883, A. H. Bullen issued his *Collection of Old English Plays* in four volumes. In the second volume there appears a reprint of an old play called *Dick of Devon-*

[25] Cf. Vol. XLIX (1833), pp. 1-29.

[26] Cf. Vol. XVI (Sept.-Dec. 1834), p. 104.

[27] Cf. *Notes and Queries: a Medium of Inter-communication for Literary Men, Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists, etc.,* Vol. XII (July-Dec. 1855), pp. 26-27.

shire which F. G. Fleay has since attempted to identify with *The Brothers,* one of Shirley's lost plays. Bullen also wishes to ascribe *Captain Underwit* to Shirley. Professor Schelling, however, has proved that it belongs to William Cavendish, the Duke of Newcastle, and that its real title is *The Country Captain,* but he states, it " may not be so wide of the mark in view of the assertion of Wood that Shirley assisted his noble patron in ' the composure of certain plays.' " [28]

The publication of Shirley's complete set of plays gave an unusual impetus to an intensive study of his works by the writers of more recent times. Two essays, by leading writers, appeared a few years after the publication; both of them, however, are unjust in their estimate of Shirley's work. The first of these was by Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), " Plays and Puritans and other Historical Essays," and appeared in 1885 with his published works. He considers *The Gamester* a good example of the immorality of the seventeenth century drama.[29]

The other essay appeared five years later, and came from the pen of Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909). Coming from such an able poet himself, one would expect a more just appreciation of a fellow-poet's work. But it is positively disappointing. Swinburne evidently did not give the dramas a sincere study; all through the essay he shows a decidedly superficial knowledge of the matter he attempts to criticise. For instance, he treats such a delightful comedy as *The Royal Master* with the flourish of some forty-odd high-sounding words and bombastic phrases. He terms the work " unqualified rubbish . . . which can be read not without irritation, indignation and astonishment, but at all events without stupefying fatigue and insuperable somnolence." [30] Altogether the essay shows a

[28] Cf. Bullen, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1-99, 315 ff.; Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama,* II, 283-284; *Athenae Oxonienses,* III, p. 739.

[29] Cf. *Works,* XVI, pp. 53-58.

[30] Cf. *The Fortnightly Review* (Jan.-June, 1890), Vol. XLVII (n. s.), p. 461. Also Cf. Nason, *op. cit.*, p. 450-453.

decided superficiality, a pedantic substitution of high sounding adjectives for specific facts, an utter absence of scholarship, not to speak of justice, and an almost malicious unfairness, that render it useless.

The first attempt to consider Shirley's dramas in relation to other European dramatists was an article that appeared in the *Romanische Forschungen* in the year 1899. It was written by A. L. Stiefel. The article, entitled "Die Nachahmung spanischer Komödien in England unter den ersten Stuarts," gives a detailed comparison of Shirley's *The Opportunity* and Tirso de Molina's *El Castigo del Penséque.*[31]

A few years later the same author published a second article of the same nature, in which he gives a detailed comparison of *The Young Admiral* by Shirley with Lope de Vega's *Don Lope de Cardona.*[32]

Another interesting article by a German scholar, P. Nissen, appeared in 1900. It is chiefly biographical, and evidently is intended as an introduction for a work of a more extensive nature. Nason considers it "the most scholarly life of Shirley that has yet appeared." [33]

It was reviewed the following year by the German scholar, Otto Glöde. He quotes from Nissen in the following manner: "James Shirley is wenige Jahre nach seinem Auftreten (1625) der Lieblingsdichter des Publikums geworden, dessen Geschmack er glücklich zu treffen wusste." Shirley's change from romanticism to realism is thus accounted for: "Die romantischen Sujets werden aufgegeben und dafür realistische gewählt. Unter Karl I hielten sich die Mittelklassen mit den strengen Sitten der Puritaner vom Theater fern, und unter Karl II liebte die vornehme Gesellschaft nur noch pikante

[31] Cf. *op. cit.*, Band V (1890), s. 193-220.

[32] Cf. *Archiv für das Studium der neuren Sprachen und Literaturen*, CXIX (1907), s. 309-350.

[33] Cf. "James Shirley. Ein Beitrag zur englischen Literaturgeschichte," in *Realschule in Eilbeck zu Hamburg. Bericht über das Schuljahr 1900-01.* Progr. Nr. 804, s. 1-26.

Stoffe. James Shirley ist derjenige Dramatiker, der zuerst den Geschmack des Hofes zu treffen wusste, und dessen Stücke daher den besonderen Beifall derselben fanden. Er wurde der Begründer des erotischen Dramas. Die Stoffe entlehnte er vorwiegend der spanischen Komödie." [34]

The account of James Shirley by A. W. Ward in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (*DNB*), edited by Sidney Lee, published in 1897, is an excellent article, but rather unreliable on account of the many errors which have been pointed out by Professor Nason.[35] The other two works by Dr. Ward, *A History of English Dramatic Literature to the Death of Queen Anne* (1899), and the edition of Shirley's *The Royal Master* (1914), are characterized by similar typographical inaccuracies.[36]

C. W. Moulton in his *Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Authors,* 1901, gives a compilation of the biographical and critical accounts which have appeared about our author.[37]

Five plays of Shirley, together with his celebrated masque, *The Triumph of Peace,* were published in the Mermaid Series (n. d.), with an introductory chapter of a biographical and critical nature by Edmund Gosse. The plays appearing in this collection are the following: *The Witty Fair One, The Traitor, Hyde Park, The Lady of Pleasure.*

F. G. Fleay has devoted a great deal of study to the life and works of James Shirley. His two works, *Annals of the Careers of James and Henry Shirley,* 1885,[38] and *A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama,* 1559-1642, appearing in

[34] Cf. *Englische Studien,* 34 Band (1904), s. 392-394.

[35] Cf. Vol. LII, pp. 126-133; also cf. Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 454-455.

[36] Cf. Vol. III, pp. 89-125, and *Representative English Comedies,* pp. 547-562 for references to Shirley.

[37] Cf. pp. 189-193 for the account of Shirley.

[38] Cf. *Anglia,* "*Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie,* VIII Band, S. 405-414.

1891,[39] are important contributions but unreliable, according to Nason, on account of the numerous typographical errors occurring in their pages.[40]

Prof. F. E. Schelling, of the University of Pennsylvania, issued in 1908 two volumes on the *Elizabethan Drama,* 1558-1642, remarkable for their critical discussion of the plays of Shirley.[41]

James Shirley, sein Leben und seine Werke, by J. Schipper, was published in 1911. Considerably more than half of the volume is devoted to a biographical sketch and a critical estimate of Shirley's life and works. This study serves as a kind of introduction to his translation into German of *The Royal Master,—Der Königliche Meister.*[42] It might be worth while here to mention that the half-tone portrait of Shirley which appears as a frontispiece to this work is the same as that used in the Gifford-Dyce collection. Nason states that this is known as the *Lupton* engraving of 1833. Nason uses a portrait different from this. All three, however, bear the stamp of the Bodleian Library. Consequently, there must be two definite portraits of Shirley in the Library.

The article on "Ford and Shirley" contained in the *Cambridge History of English Literature,* 1910, is by W. A. Neilson, of Harvard University. It is a scholarly account of Shirley's life and works, but adds nothing to what has already appeared.[43]

A special study of Shirley's tragi-comedies is the work of F. H. Ristine, in his work entitled *English Tragicomedy, its Origin and History,* which appeared in 1910.[44]

Two additional studies on Shirley and his work appeared in

[39] Cf. Vol. II, pp. 233-246, for the account of Shirley.

[40] Cf. Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 430-431.

[41] Cf. Vol. II, pp. 284-297, for the critique on Shirley's realistic plays, and Vol. II, pp. 312-326, for a similar discussion on the romantic comedies.

[42] Cf. *Wiener Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie,* XXXVI Band, 1911.

[43] Cf. Vol. VI, Part II, Chapt. VIII, "The Drama to 1642."

[44] Cf. pp. 135-139 for the chief reference to Shirley.

the year 1914. The first is a Ph. D. dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania, by H. T. Parlin, on *Shirley's Comedies of London Life;* the other is by R. S. Forsythe and deals with *The Relations of Shirley's Plays to the Elizabethan Drama.* Mr. Parlin's work seems to me a misnomer, for he devotes most of his work to a discussion of George Chapman and *The Ball*, with but a brief mention of the other plays. Mr. Forsythe's book shows a vast amount of research and careful reading, but the book as a whole lacks inspiration.

The most extensive work on James Shirley thus far undertaken is that by Prof. A. H. Nason, which appeared in 1915. *James Shirley, Dramatist, a Biographical and Critical Study,* shows a great deal of painstaking research. It is undoubtedly the most complete study of our author in existence. It is especially valuable since Professor Nason has carefully scrutinized the many works dealing with Shirley, and has brought to light many fallacies and misstatements that have been copied time and again by scholars who used the old sources without verifying the facts. But it seems strange that the professor, with all his researches, is still skeptical about the early life of Shirley. Then again, some of his criticisms appear rather unsympathetic. For instance, he refers to the play *St. Patrick for Ireland* as "a jumble of lofty religious fervor, blood-and-thunder magic, miracles, licentiousness, and horse-play. . . . No wonder that *St. Patrick* was never licensed for the London stage, and that the promised 'second part' is non-extant." [45] The professor seems to forget the time when the play was written, and this circumstance is enough to account for the fact that it "was never licensed" and also for the fact that the "second part is non-extant." *St. Patrick* was written primarily for Ireland, where the sentiment was predominantly Catholic, except in court circles. Shirley evidently realized that a play founded on "popish" traditions would find little favor in

[45] Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 313-314.

London, where the Puritans were about to close the theatres and forbid all kinds of "ungodly" amusements.

Most of the plays of Shirley have from time to time received careful and appreciative criticism. Critics, however, as a rule, have considered his *St. Patrick for Ireland* with a little misgiving—in fact it is usually passed over with but a brief mention. In 1918 John Eglinton [pseud. William Kirkpatrick Magee] in his published edition of *Anglo-Irish Essays* deals with the subject in a fair and appreciative manner, showing at once its beauties as well as its blemishes. The author not only discusses Shirley's play, but deals with the entire subject of "St. Patrick on the Stage," and shows what a different picture Calderon has given of the Irish Saint in his *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*. Incidentally we may note that this work of Eglinton has never before been mentioned among the Shirlian bibliographies.

The last word on Shirley appeared in 1922 in the *Modern Language Review*. The article, "Some New Facts About Shirley," was written by A. C. Baugh, of the University of Pennsylvania. Though brief, it contains some important discoveries in Shirley's life that have hitherto been unknown. Professor Baugh proves that "Shirley graduated a Bachelor of Arts from Cambridge University in 1617"; [46] that "he was promised the mastership of St. Alban's Grammar School in 1618"; [47] that "a daughter Mary (probably his first child) was baptized at St. Albans, September, 1619"; that "his first wife's name, as we learn from the records, was Elizabeth"; [48] that "in January, 1621, he became master of the School, and

[46] *Book of Matriculations and Degrees . . .* 1544 to 1659, p. 605, he cites for his authority.

[47] He quotes from A. E. Gibbs, *Historical Records of St. Albans* (1888), p. 64, and *Corporation Records of St. Albans* (1890), p. 68, for a verification of his statements.

[48] He refers to *The Parish Registers of St. Albans Abbey, 1558-1689*, p. 54, to prove his assertions.

was certainly such until September, 1623, possibly somewhat later" . . . ; and that "in May, 1622, a second daughter was born; she died in December of the same year; and finally in 1624, he voted as one of the Proctors representing St. Albans in convocation at St. Paul's Cathedral, a fact which indicates some connection with the Church." These facts clarify some of the dubious statements made by Professor Nason.[49]

It will be seen from the foregoing pages that the study of James Shirley is not entirely new in the field of English literature. Most of that former study, however, has been of a directly critical or of a biographical nature, largely based on what had been written before. In comparatively recent times scholars have turned their attention to a new phase in the study of Shirley and his works, namely, to the sources of his plays. A good start has been made by P. Nissen into the Spanish sources. R. S. Forsythe has thoroughly covered the field of the Elizabethan dramas in as far as they may have influenced Shirley in his work. The present dissertation, on the Catholic Philosophy of Shirley's dramas, will therefore present Shirley in a new light, surrounded by a novel atmosphere, in which he, as a Catholic writer, nevertheless belongs. It is earnestly hoped that this work will add something to the ever increasing accumulation of Shirliana.

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[49] Cf. *Modern Language Review* (July, 1922), Vol. XVII, pp. 228-235.

CHAPTER II.

England from 1624 to 1642.

Outline.—Shirley an Elizabethan in a restrictive sense—The reign of James I—his disregard for Parliament—his foreign policy—the "divine right of kings"—controversies with the Commons—The reign of Charles I—hopes of the Commons at his succession—he follows the policy of his father—his disregard for Parliament—the "divine right of kings"—his marriage with Henrietta of France—controversies with the Commons—Religious aspects of the time—Catholicism—influence of the queen-consort—Anglicanism—archbishop Laud—Puritanism—opposition to the stage—Shirley's attitude—Standard of morality of the time—immorality of the nobility—the king and queen remain immune—The drama during the reign of Charles I—its decadence—plays are written for the dissolute noble audiences—characteristics—some justification for Puritan complaints—religious convictions of the playwrights—Shirley not an Elizabethan—his "professional" aloofness—his use of conventional *motifs*—his lack of flattery—his serious religious tone—his work is unique in the period.

As a rule critics consider James Shirley "the last of the Elizabethans," [1] the "Epigone of those great dramatists" [2] who flourished during the most productive period of English literature. This period, according to Professor Schelling, "extends from the beginning of the reign of the last of the Tudor sovereigns to the Restoration of King Charles II (1558-1660)." [3] It is only in a restrictive sense, however, that we can place Shirley among the Elizabethans; that is, when we consider merely the span of years in which he lived. The nature and content of his plays point forward rather to the future work of Goldsmith

[1] Nason, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[2] Schipper, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
[3] *Op. cit.*, Intr. xxiii.

and Addison than backward to the dramas of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Fletcher.[4]

Shirley was born in the year 1596 and died during the year of the great London fire of 1666. His career as a dramatist commenced with the production of his earliest play, *Love Tricks, or the School of Complement,* in 1624, and extended to the year 1642, when his activity came to an abrupt end by the closing of the theaters through the instrumentality of the Puritans. Some of his plays were indeed revived after the Restoration in 1660, but these were the fruits of his earlier labors, for Wood informs us that after the year 1642 Shirley devoted his time to the teaching of school, and to the composition of a few poems and some Latin grammatical works,[5] or, as Dyce says, "from his talents, as a dramatist, Shirley would reap no benefit in those gloomy and puritanic days," of the Commonwealth.[6] Shirley's dramatic activity is therefore placed between 1624 and 1642, a period of eighteen years.

The Elizabethan period, to which Shirley is usually assigned, according to Professor Schelling's calculation, covers a span of one hundred and two years and includes the reigns of Elizabeth (1558-1603), of James I (1603-1625), of Charles I (1625-1649), and the régime of the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell (1649-1658), and his son Richard (1658-1660). The eighteen years of Shirley's dramatic activity fall within the reign of the second of the Stuart sovereigns.

Charles I succeeded his father, James I, on the throne of England. The personal government in its utter disregard for Parliament that James I wished to establish, and his attempts before his death to form an alliance with Spain by the marriage of his son to the Infanta, led to bitter controversies with the Commons, and rendered him generally unpopular. As

[4] Cf. Schipper, *op. cit.*, p. 1; Jusserand, *A Literary History of the English People,* III, p. 436.

[5] *Athenae Oxonienses,* III, 737; also cf. *Works,* VI, 401.

[6] *Works,* Intr. xliv.

Green expresses it, "he had disenchanted his people of their blind faith in the monarchy by a policy at home and abroad which ran counter to every national instinct." [7] Furthermore, the theory of the "divine right of kings," which he advocated and commanded to be preached from the pulpits of the churches, antagonized the Puritans, who were rapidly increasing in numbers. The reign of James I can therefore be said to have been characterized by a series of bitter quarrels and controversies with his people.

Consequently great hopes were entertained in England when Charles I ascended the throne. He had been educated as a Protestant on the continent, and his many promises to the Commons augured favorably for a more peaceful reign than his father's had been. "The stately reserve, the personal dignity and decency of manners which distinguished the Prince contrasted favorably with the gabble and indecorum of his father." [8] His popularity was further increased when it was known definitely that the negotiations for his marriage with the Infanta, commenced during the closing years of his father's life, were discontinued and the match abandoned. The Commons, therefore, entertained high hopes that the domestic affairs of the English people would be free from foreign entanglements and influences.

But the people were soon disillusioned, for Charles had hardly assumed the reins of government, and had been accepted by the Parliament which convened in May, 1625, when it was seen that he would continue the same arbitrary, despotic policy which characterized the rule of his father. He manifested the same disregard for Parliament which his father had shown; in fact, he went so far as to fail to hold a session of that body for a period of eleven consecutive years.[9] The theory of "divine

[7] *A Short History of the English People*, p. 493.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 495.
[9] Green, *op. cit.*, p. 514; Jusserand, *op. cit.*, p. 561.

rights " that caused so much opposition to his father was again advocated, although not as definitely. Thus the régime of Charles became even more personal than that of James, for the stubbornness and obstinacy of his character would brook little or no opposition. Furthermore, the fear of a foreign influence on the domestic affairs of England was aroused by his marriage with Henrietta, " the daughter of Henry the Fourth of France, and sister of its King." [10] As a result Charles experienced an opposition and resistance to his policy that became more pronounced with the increase of the Puritan power. This eventually led to his downfall and finally to his death on the scaffold in 1649.

This in brief is a general outline of the political situation which characterized the early years in the reign of Charles I and which also constituted the years of Shirley's dramatic activity.

The religious status was just as chaotic. The three great religious bodies that were influential in shaping the morals of the people of the time were Catholicism, Anglicanism and Puritanism.

The influence of the Catholic Church, so pronounced in the earlier history of the English people, had begun to wane from the Reformation under Henry VIII. All Catholic forms of worship and ceremony had been banned from the kingdom during the reign of Elizabeth. James I had caused to be enacted a number of penal laws that made attendance at Catholic services an offense subject to fine and imprisonment. These laws were still in existence in 1624, when Shirley began his dramatic activity, although enforced with less severity. When Henrietta became the queen-consort to Charles, " she established a Catholic form of worship in the palace," [11] and mass was occasionally celebrated in her private chapel. These services were attended by some of the nobles and by the immediate members of her

[10] Green, *op. cit.*, p. 459.
[11] Jusserand, *op. cit.*, p. 561.

household." [12] We may conclude that she endeavored to use her influence in behalf of her co-religionists. But favorable as the situation became for the Catholics during the early years of the reign of Charles, the great power of the Anglican officials appointed by the crown counteracted the little influence Henrietta may have exerted and dispelled all hopes of a complete disenfranchisement the Catholics may have entertained. They were still compelled, outside the court, to practice their religion in secret.

Anglicanism had come into existence during the reign of Elizabeth with her desire to establish a religion " which will be neither that of the Pope nor that of Calvin, and a church which will be neither that of Rome nor that of Geneva: the Anglican religion and the Established Church of England." [13] This became the state religion for England, and royal authority attempted to make its principles dominant in the lives of the people during Shirley's dramatic career. King Charles was indeed a royal Protestant, but his queen was a Catholic, and the Puritans regarded him with suspicion. The direction of ecclesiastical affairs was entrusted to William Laud, archbishop (Anglican) of Canterbury. This was an unhappy choice on the part of the king, for Laud, although an ardent champion of the Anglican cause, hardly fitted in with the times, and was unsuited for the task imposed upon him. He was an ardent partisan of the *via media:* that is, of keeping an equal distance from Rome and from Geneva. He was learned, sincere, virtuous, and convinced that it was sufficient to follow one's own conscience in order to do good and lead a virtuous life. He encouraged the king in his autocratic tendencies, accepted and

[12] *Ibid.*—" In Holy Week, 1632, as many as 10,000 people visited the sepulchre in the queen's chapel. At the same period upwards of 1,000 used to attend the services every Sunday at the chapel of one of the ambassadors. In 1635, at the opening of the queen's new chapel in Somerset House, there was exposition for forty hours, and 2,500 people went to holy communion."—Taunton, E. L., *The English Black Monks,* II, p. 117 note.

[13] Jusserand, *op. cit.,* II, p. 246.

commended his belief in the "divine right" and made of that right one of the canons of the church. He was openly accused by the Puritans of "Romanism" and of "Popery" because he was accustomed to bow his head on entering a church and at the name of Jesus.[14] He was severe on the Puritans for their religious views, and equally hard on the frivolous Cavaliers for their dissolute lives. So determined became the opposition of the Puritans to the religious policy of Laud, that the vacillating Charles finally yielded to his impeachment and definite removal from office. With the downfall of the archbishop the cause of the Anglicans was lost, and the power of the Puritans became supreme.

When Elizabeth established Anglicanism as the state religion she was confronted by the opposition of a certain group of Protestant individuals who were known by the name of Puritans. They may be classed as the extremists of the Protestant denominations. Opposed to all form of authority, they refused to recognize the government of the new church by bishops and archbishops. They based all their religious beliefs on the Bible, but adopted the stern spirit of the Old Testament rather than the benignity of the New. They recruited their membership from the ranks of the common people, and like the Catholics were excluded from all official positions. But they had powerful friends and supporters in Parliament, at the universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and even at the court itself. With the influence of these they attempted arbitrarily to enforce their religious beliefs and practices throughout the kingdom. Later on, after Shirley had ceased his activity as a dramatist, and the power of the Puritans was supreme, the Lord's day was changed into a strict Jewish Sabbath; popular pastimes and innocent amusements, even music itself, were denounced as sins to be avoided on all occasions.[15] "The want of poetry," says Green,

[14] Cf. Green, *op. cit.*, pp. 509-513; Jusserand, *op cit.*, p. 560.

[15] "Die Puritaner haben in England die Musik, sie haben die dramatische Kunst ertötet. . . . Ebenso ist ein charakteristisches Zeichen dafür der

in describing the Puritan influence of the time ," in the common Puritan temper condemned half the popular observances of England as superstitious. It was superstitious to keep Christmas or to deck the house with holly and ivy. It was superstitious to dance round the village May-pole. It was flat " popery " to eat a mince pie. The rough sport, the mirth and fun of " merry England " were out of place in an England called with so great a calling. Bull-baiting, bear-baiting, horse-racing, cock-fighting, the village revel, the dance under the May-pole were put down with the same indiscriminating severity." [16]

This chaotic state of affairs, in politics as well as in religion, had a decided influence on the standard of morality of the period. The influence of the Catholic Church in curbing the licentiousness which followed in the wake of the Reformation and continued during the reigns of Elizabeth and James was negligible, since Catholicism had been banished from the kingdom. Anglicanism, with its many divisions and subdivisions, its uncertainty of doctrine, its bickerings and quibblings on doctrinal subjects, showed plainly that it could not check the immorality and disregard for law so rampant at the time.[17]

The hypocrisy and fanaticism of the Puritans was equally as ineffectual.

During the eighteen years that intervened between the death of James I and the outbreak of the Civil War, social conditions in England changed little. Forsythe remarks that " vices were practiced privately which had been practiced in public at the less strict and less outwardly decent court of James I." [18] The

fast gänzliche Mangel wirklich schöner Volksliedermelodien in England—zum Unterschied von Schottland."—Schröer, *Grundzüge und Haupttypen der Englischen Literaturgeschichte*, II, p. 26.

[16] *Op. cit.*, p. 606.

[17] " A horror-stricken pamphleteer of the time numbered sixteen religious sects as existing in defiance of the law; and widely as these bodies differed among themselves, all were one in repudiating any right of control in faith or worship by the church and its clergy . . . or in dictating the morality of the people."—Cf. Green, *op. cit.*, pp. 562 ff.

[18] *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

members of the nobility that surrounded the court of Charles were known for the dissolute lives they led; debauchery was a common practice; divorce and infidelity to the marriage vow were of frequent occurrence and became the subject of jest and verse. Yet in spite of the immorality that surrounded them, the king and queen remained immune to all aspersions on that score. Criticize him as much as they please on account of the policy of his government, yet the enemies of Charles were forced to acknowledge that in regard to the morality of his private conduct, they were unable to find any flaw. Shirley frequently refers to this in his plays, as will be shown in a subsequent Chapter.

In 1624, when Shirley's first play was produced, the English drama had already passed the zenith of its excellence. It had reached the acme of perfection under Shakespeare and Jonson and was now in a decadent stage. The bitter invectives launched against the stage and the determined opposition of the Puritans to all forms of entertainment, had already accomplished its purpose. The playwrights of the period continued the defense of their profession, as their predecessors had done in the days of Elizabeth and James I. As Leslie Stephen says, "the drama of the period reflected in the main the sentiments of an aristocratic class alarmed by the growing vigour of the Puritanical citizens." [19]

The Puritans from the very nature of their religious beliefs were banned from attendance at the theater. The line of demarcation between the regular playgoer and the Puritans became more pronounced during the reign of Charles I. Consequently, the plays of the period were written, not for the mercantile classes, nor for the common people, but for their religious and political adversaries, the members of the court and the high church party. The drama thus assumed a character that was in conformity to the low standard of morality

[19] "Essay on Massinger," *Hours in a Library* (III Series), p. 9.

that distinguished the lives of its patrons. Infidelity and adultery, even stark madness, were at once the most comic and the most tragic themes to the audiences of Shirley's time. So much was this the practice of the playwrights of the period, that some of the comedies could be considered a genuine indictment of the constancy and chastity of all womankind of the time. The new species of drama, the realistic, inaugurated and popularized by Jonson, and in which Shirley attained his greatest reputation, gave a wonderful opportunity for a portrayal of the times. Immoral scenes and risqué situations, indecent and lascivious jests and verses, probably taken from the brothels of the time, were the general characteristics of the drama. This immorality, however, was of the kind which raised the spontaneous laugh of the nobility, the coarse guffaw of the rabble. The elegant, calculating, insinuating, mirthless immorality of the fine gentlemen and ladies, that was to characterize the drama of a later date, did not yet excite interest on the stage; its day had not arrived.[20]

It must be admitted that there is a justification for the Puritan complaints against the disorderly behavior of the courtesans, bucks, and apprentices who frequented the theatres of the time, as well as the dissolute habits of the actors and of some of the playwrights who offended in this respect. A study of the history of the drama shows an increasing fondness for equivocal situations and obscene jests just at this particular period. "People are growing more precise and plays more licentious," was Flecknoe's comment as late as 1664,[21] But the Puritans as a general rule took no exception to these "accidental excrescences of the drama." On the contrary, the more we study the history of the controversy between the playwrights and the Puritans, the more we receive the impression that evils of this nature were rather welcomed by the latter, in order to give greater weight to their threadbare arguments against the art

[20] Cf. Jusserand, *op. cit.*, III, p. 437.
[21] Cf. Hazlitt, *English Drama*, p. 275 ff.

itself as such. Furthermore, when bias and prejudice prompted, it is not difficult to imagine that such evils were greatly exaggerated. For instance, the Puritans contended that folly and sin should be lamented at home rather than laughed at in a play on the stage; this argument seems to show their utter lack of humor displayed in all its terrifying enormity. To clinch their arguments they quoted in deadly earnest the passage of *Deuteronomy* (xxii, 5) in which men and women are forbidden to disguise themselves in the garments of the other sex. "A woman shall not be clothed with man's apparel, neither shall a man use woman's apparel: for he that doeth these things is abominable before God." Others quoted the passage from St. Paul's *Letter to the Ephesians* (v, 3), "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints." Such passages were of paramount importance to their arguments, for it gave them a Biblical foundation; they became the favorite theme of the controversialists who never tired of dwelling on them with much display of learning and more indignation.[22]

As regards the personal religious convictions of the dramatists of the time, it may be safely assumed that in all essential points of religion and morality they were chiefly on the side of the Established or Anglican Church. It is true that their religious opinions were chiefly shown in their attacks upon the Catholics on the one hand, and the Puritans, on the other. The religious philosophy of the Anglican Church was not sufficiently developed to permeate their works, as for instance the Greek religion affected the Attic drama, or Catholicism influenced the Spanish. "The English playwrights found little of the poetic in Anglicanism except devils and witches," says Creizenach, "and these could not be introduced on every occasion, although it was done often enough in the Elizabethan dramas."[23]

[22] The publication of the so-called *Book of Sports*, published in 1618, was no doubt another reason for arousing the ire of the Puritans.—*An English Garner*, reprint by E. Arber, Vol. IV, p. 513.

[23] *Geschichte des neuern Dramas*, p. 43.

They could, however, give to a natural piety, to a natural purity, to a morality based on natural goodness, a religious development or interpretation without any definite reference to a particular creed. This was the case with the dramatists who were contemporaneous with Shirley, with the possible exception of Massinger. Such then were the general characteristics of the drama when Shirley began his career.

Critics and biographers have, as I stated before, ranked Shirley among the Elizabethans. A glance at the career of the most illustrious of this group will show us that most of them were either dead or had ceased active production of plays by the time Shirley's first plays appeared on the stage. He was a mere boy, little dreaming of the future, when most of them were in the zenith of their career. Shakespeare (1564-1616), Beaumont (1584-1616), Middleton (1570-1627), Marston (1575?-1634), Fletcher (1579-1625), Dekker (1570-1641?), and Webster (1580?-1625?) were less in vogue in the year 1624 than they had been heretofore. Jonson (1573-1637) produced his last two plays of minor importance[24] as late as 1633, and Massinger (1683-1640) made his last appearance about the same time with the production of his two popular plays, *The City Madam* (1632) and *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1633). Heywood (d. 1650) and Ford (1586-1640?), of the entire group, alone were active, but their popularity was already on the decline.[25] A vast crowd of lesser luminaries, however, were taking their place, and were beguiling the audiences with mediocre performances.

Among these minor dramatists Shirley's genius scintillated like a lone star. "He moved among his contemporaries so modestly and quietly," says Parlin, "that he failed in any peculiar manner to impress himself upon his age.[26] In his

[24] *The Magnetic Lady* (1632) and *The Tale of a Tub* (1633).

[25] Cf. Cousin, *A Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature*, for above data.

[26] *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

unobtrusive way he tried to maintain the exalted standard of the noble heritage he had received.

A careful study of his works reveals that in certain respects Shirley is like the dramatists of his age, and that he shows the influences of the more celebrated who went before him. This similarity, however, is chiefly in the external form of the drama. In aim and content his plays are unique in the age in which he lived, and point rather to those witty delineations of men and manners that characterize the writings of Addison and Goldsmith.

In the first place, his works, contrary to the practice of his dramatic contemporaries, are the result of his own efforts; he seldom collaborated with anyone else. Of the thirty-five dramas usually ascribed to him, only two were written in collaboration with other writers. In other respects he seems to have had little in common with the writers of his time. The more illustrious were gone, and the lesser ones had little appeal for him. This professional aloofness as it may be called, is a marked characteristic in Shirley's life, and makes his works unique. Again, while convention imposed the ugly incongruities and indelicate *motifs,* so obvious a feature of the work of his fellow dramatists, Shirley uses these *motifs* to inculcate lessons of morality. He never uses adultery as a purely comic theme or *motif,* and to his women he always gives a noble purity. A woman's virtue, her chastity, her fidelity, become again and again the power of redeeming a man from the sins of illicit passion. The ultimate conversion of the roué is one of his favorite themes. As Ward says: "Shirley is no disciple of the social heresy that the pleasures of one class have a right to polute the morals of another." Later on the same author continues: "Not one of our pre-Restoration dramatists save Shakespeare and Heywood deserves less than Shirley to be singled out for condemnation as offender against principles which in his generation and with his lights he sought to honor and uphold." [27]

[27] *English Dramatic Literature,* III, p. 125.

Furthermore, Shirley endeavored to inject into the drama a different vitality from that of the Shakespeareans, who had "made it a satellite of a court and estranged it from the religious culture of the people." [28] He was not an adept in "practicing the court sin of flattery," for the élite in his audience. "I have never affected the ways of flattery," he writes in the dedicatory letter to Henry Osborne, Esq., prefixed to his second play, *The Maid's Revenge*,[29] and a careful reading of his plays shows the truth of this statement. In spite of this drawback, if such it may be termed, he became the favorite dramatist of the court and "the most dramatick [sic] Poet of his time." [30]

Another point which distinguishes him from his contemporaries is the serious, religious tone that pervades his works. It took no small amount of courage to embrace a faith which at that particular time was the target of the most bitter attacks of his fellow dramatists, a faith which brought him neither position nor advancement, but the contrary, obloquy and derision. One cannot help but admire a man who risks all for his convictions, and has the courage to follow them. This serious tone, this religious conviction, pervades Shirley's work throughout. "No dramatists," says Eglinton, "could have taken their art more seriously than Jonson, Massinger and Shirley, who seem to have written less for an audience than with a view to the ultimate publication of their collected works; but no amount of artistic seriousness [such as Jonson's work possesses] could make a drama serious which was estranged from the religious culture of the nation," for "the Spanish [drama], like the Greek, but unlike the English, had not cut itself adrift from its religious origins, and so remained a far more truly national institution than the English drama ever became after the Reformation." [31]

[28] Eglinton, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
[29] *Works*, I, p. 101.
[30] *Athenae Oxonienses*, III, p. 737.
[31] *Op. cit.*, p. 59-60.

In the foregoing points Shirley can hardly be classed among the Elizabethan dramatists. His writings, it is true, are soiled, marred if you will, by the characteristics of the age in which he lived; but such a condiment was indispensable at that time. More than any of his contemporaries, he "had the merit of bringing us almost within sight of those witty and kindly observers of men and manners, Goldsmith and Addison." [32] Nor can he be counted among the poets who flourished after the Restoration, for when the theatres were reopened, Shirley, although he sorely needed the means of livelihood, staunchly adhered to "his declared resolution of never again attempting dramatic poetry." [33] He went back to his lowly life of an humble schoolmaster, "while a degenerate race of playwrights arose to delight with bombast and obscenity, a tasteless and licentious age." [34]

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[32] Jusserand, *op. cit.*, III, p. 463.
[33] *Works*, Intr., p. lv.
[34] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER III.

Biographical Sketch of Shirley's Life.

Outline.—Exact date of Shirley's birth uncertain—four hypotheses of his ancestry—Education at the Merchant-Taylors' School, at Oxford, at Cambridge—*Eccho, or The Infortunate Lovers,* his first production—Shirley ordained Anglican minister—his "living" at St. Albans—his conversion to Catholicism—the mastership of St. Alban's Grammar School—a brief glimpse of his domestic life—he moves to London and begins his career as a dramatist—*Love Tricks,* his first play—his visit to Ireland—the Civil War and the Commonwealth—Shirley's retirement after eighteen years of dramatic activity—the Restoration—publication of Shirley's plays—his Latin grammatical works—the London fire of 1666—Shirley's death and burial at St. Giles—Addendum.

The exact date of Shirley's birth, his ancestry, and his early education, are shrouded in uncertainty. He was born "in or near the parish of St. Mary Woolchurch, London,[1] on the 13th or 18th of September, 1596," states Wood. A little later he explains in a note, "so I have been informed by his son, the butler of Furnivall's inn, in Holborn, near London." [2] Relying on this authority, biographers have generally accepted these facts as certain. Nason, however, states that "presumably the future dramatist—was "James, sonne of James Sharlie, who was baptized on the 7th of September, 1596." [3]

The exact year of his birth is therefore certain; but some discrepancy exists as to the exact day and month. Since Nason quotes the *Register of St. Mary Woolchurch* as his authority, and Wood refers to the *Entry-book of the Merchant-Taylors'*

[1] Since then "incorporated into that of St. Mary Woolnoth, Walbrook."—Forsythe, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

[2] *Athenae Oxonienses,* III, p. 737.

[3] *Register of St. Mary Woolchurch,* cited by Nason, *op cit.*, p. 19.

School, one is inclined to accept the professor's version of the controversy, since the latter record is further removed from the event, and an error could more probably have crept into the school record than into the baptismal register of the church.

There are four distinct hypotheses offered by biographers regarding Shirley's ancestry. Some claim that he was descended from the Sherleys of Sussex, or from the Shirleys of Warwickshire.[4] Others desire to link his name with a certain James Sherley, a London goldsmith, who was the financial agent of the Plymouth colony. "Of these three hypotheses," says Nason, "each can be all but conclusively refuted," for "in the genealogies of the Shirleys of Warwick, of the Sherleys of Sussex, and of the Sherleys who were London goldsmiths, our dramatist receives no place." Nason, therefore, identifies Shirley with "that James, the sonne of James Sharlie," whose name appears on the baptismal register of St. Mary Woolchurch, London, on September 7th, 1596.[5]

This family of "James Sharlie" was evidently of the common class, of rather mediocre circumstances. If this surmise be true, it would harmonize well with Shirley's early public career as a struggling schoolmaster. Later on, when his fortunes increased with the success of his plays, he, no doubt, applied for the privilege of a coat of arms, a sign of gentility in those days, and signed himself "James Shirley, Gent."[6] This conjecture,

[4] The records do not observe a uniform spelling of the name. It is spelled with an "i" on most of his title-pages, in his will (if my transcript be accurate), and even in the engraving of 1658, "Jacobus Shirlaeus." On the other hand, the name is spelled "Sherley" in the probation register of Merchant-Taylors' School; "Shurley" in the register of christenings of St. Giles, without Cripplegate, February 26, 1624/5; "Shirly" (but never "Sherley") on a small minority of his title-pages; and "Sherley" in the burial record of St. Giles in the Fields, October 29, 1666."—Nason, *op. cit.*, p. 13, note.

[5] Cf. Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-20, for a full and interesting discussion of Shirley's ancestry.

[6] "A purchased coat of arms was then one of those vanities such as there have been many since, which the great city could make fun of, but

if accepted, would give some reason for the coat of arms appearing on his portrait, which has led some biographers to connect his name with a " gentle " ancestry.

Be that as it may, this humble origin agrees with the school he attended for his early education, for when he was a little more than twelve years old he was admitted into Merchant-Taylors' School, October 4, 1608, where so many famous men of English letters received their early training. This school was founded in 1561, and was situated " on a site between Cannon St. and the Thames." It was " a schoole for liberty most free, being open expressly for poore men's children, as well of all nations as for the merchaunt tailors themselves." [7]

Here he remained for about four years and, according to Schipper, " seems to have distinguished himself by an unusual application and diligence." [8] He made rapid progress in his preliminary studies, as the records cited by Nason show, and according to Dyce, " left the school on the 11th of June—the annual election-day, when the " upper boys " almost invariably depart." [9]

In the same year, 1612, he entered St. John's College, Oxford. There seems to be no doubt that he entered the university with the intention of preparing himself for the Anglican ministry. Oxford at that time had as its regent the famous Dr. William Laud,[10] whom the serious, conscientious Shirley

which the country town took quite seriously."—Jusserand, *op. cit.*, III, p. 213. It is noteworthy that Shirley is not consistent in the use of the word " Gent." after his name; it appears on the title-pages of but eight of his productions.

[7] Staunton, *Great Schools of England* (ed. 1869), p. 177.

[8] " . . . wo er sich schon als Knabe durch hervorrangende Befähigung und durch Fleiss hervorgetan zu haben scheint."—*Op. cit.*, p. 3.

[9] *Works*, I, iv; Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

[10] Laud later became Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Anglican church under Charles I. Green describes him as " cold, pedantic, superstitious," whose " resolve was to raise the church of England to what he conceived to be its real position as a branch, though a reformed branch, of the great Catholic church throughout the world; protesting alike against

deeply impressed. An intimate friendship sprang up between the two, for his superior recognized in Shirley "the pregnant parts that were visible in him." A facial deformity, however, barred him from the ranks of the clerical candidates. "Having a broad or large mole upon his left cheek which some esteemed a deformity, that worthy doctor [Laud] would often tell him that he was an unfit person to take the sacred function upon him, and should never have his consent so to do." [11]

But Shirley was not to be thwarted in his aspirations for the ministry on account of the unreasonably scrupulous objections of Laud. As soon as he surmised that he had no chance for his then chosen vocation, he removed to Cambridge University, and took up his residence at Katherine Hall. His stay at Cambridge and his subsequent graduation as a Bachelor of Arts, a fact that is questioned by Nason, seem well established by a number of incidents. Among the students attending Cambridge during Shirley's time was Thomas Bancroft, the epigrammatist, who has immortalized many famous men of the time, including Shakespeare, in his unique *ben trovato* verses. One of these epigrams is devoted to Shirley.[12] Furthermore, a copy of Shirley's Poems of 1646 contain the following memorandum in Farmer's own handwriting: "James Shirley, B. A.

the innovations of Rome, and the innovations of Calvin, and basing its doctrines and usages on those of the Christian communion in the centuries which preceded the Council of Nicaea."—*Op. cit.*, p. 509.

[11] *Athenae Oxonienses*, III, p. 737. Cf. Shiels, *Cibber's Lives of the Poets*, II, p. 26-29, for a curious account of this anecdote.

[12] "To Jam[e]s Shirley:

"James, thou and I did spend some precious yeeres
At Katherine-Hall; since when, we sometimes feele
In our poetick braines, (as plaine appeares)
A whirling tricke, then caught from Katherine's wheele."
—*Two Bookes of Epigrammes* (1639), Bk. I, Ep. 13.

St. Catherine's Wheele.—A wheel-window, sometimes called a rose-window, with radiating divisions; a sort of fire-work. St. Catherine, a virgin, was put to death by torture by means of a wheel, like that of a chaff-cutter. —*Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, by E. C. Brewer, Philadelphia [n. d.].

Cath. Hall. 1619." [13] Finally, the more recent discoveries of A. C. Baugh establish the fact beyond a doubt. He asserts that "Shirley graduated a Bachelor of Arts from Cambridge University in 1617." [14] As regards the Master's degree, which Forsythe seems to think Shirley received "soon after 1619," we are not quite so certain; in fact, subsequent events in Shirley's life point to the contrary.

While at the university Shirley published his first literary production. It is entitled *Eccho, or the Infortunate Lovers.* There is no doubt that this is the same poem he again published in 1646, under the name of *Narcissus, or The Self-Lover.* The motto *haec olim* attached to the second title seems "to indicate that it was the performance of his youth." [15] It is a long poem of 130 verses of six lines each, written in iambic pentameter measures, and closely modeled on Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis.*

Having completed his university career, he was ordained a minister of the Anglican church and was appointed "to a living either in St. Albans, Hertfordshire, or in the neighborhood of that town." [16]

Our data regarding the life of Shirley at this point become rather confused. It was about this time that an event occurred which was to influence his entire subsequent career. It was his conversion to the Catholic faith. Having mentioned his entrance into holy orders, Wood refers to it in the following brief terms: "But being then unsettled in his mind, he changed his Religion for that of Rome, left his Living, and taught a Grammar School in the said Town of St. Alban." [17]

[13] *Works,* I, vi.

[14] "Some New Facts About Shirley," *Modern Language Review* (1922), No. 17, p. 234.

[15] *Works,* I, vi.—Neilson refers to it as "an example, not without beauty, of the elaborate re-telling of Ovidian tales which many Elizabethan poets attempted."—*Cambridge History of English Literature,* VI, p. 198.

[16] *Works,* I, vii.

[17] *Athenae Oxonienses,* III, 737; cf. Ward, *op. cit.,* III, pp. 90 ff.

Although Shirley had been promised the position as Master of this school as early as 1618, as we learn from the *Corporation Records* of the town quoted by Baugh, it was not until January, 1621, that his tenure of office actually began.

Concerning these three years of Shirley's life, from 1618 to 1621, we know nothing with certainty. He had given up his "living" as an Anglican minister, had embraced the faith of the Roman church, and was evidently waiting for his definite appointment at the Grammar School. Where he lived and how he occupied his time for a livelihood is mere conjecture. It seems certain, however, that he was living in the town during the time, in the neighborhood of the Abbey, for in the parish register of the Abbey church, under date of September 27, 1619, is recorded the baptism of "Marie, doughter of Mr. James Shurley by Elizabeth his wife." This gives us a brief glimpse of Shirley's domestic life, and we learn for certain that the name of his first wife was Elizabeth, not *Odelia,* as Dyce thought.[18] About two years later, May 15, 1622, the birth of a second daughter is recorded: "Grace the doughter of M^{r}. James Shurley by Elizabeth his wife," but in the same year Grace's name occurs in the list of "suche as have ben buried in the parish church of S^{t}. Albanes & S^{t}. Peters," under date of December 20, 1622.[19] Marie, who later married a certain "Standerdine Shirley *als.* Sachell," is mentioned in his will,[20] but what became of his first wife, Elizabeth, is not known, for she is not mentioned in any of the records discovered thus far. Frances, his second wife, receives mention in the will.

Shirley evidently remained at St. Alban's school till the close of the year 1624, for by February 26, 1625, he was already settled at Gray's Inn, since on that date is recorded the baptism

[18] *Works,* ix.

[19] Cf. Baugh, *op. cit.,* p. 233.

[20] Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 158, 159; the other children of Shirley's mentioned in the will are Mathias, Christopher, James and "Lawfinda the Relict of Howard Fountaine."

of Mathias, his eldest son, in the parish register of St. Giles's Church, without Cripplegate. No doubt Shirley found the position of schoolmaster rather irksome, " a drudgery " as Dyce states, and consequently gave it up. But perhaps he had other reasons for relinquishing the mastership after such a brief tenure of the office, and establishing himself in London as a dramatist. It was about this time that the fortunes and the hopes of the Catholics in London were beginning to brighten. James I had died in the year 1625, and was succeeded by his son Charles I, who had returned from France and was a proclaimed king. He seemed favorably inclined to the Catholics; he had married Henrietta Maria, daughter of King Henry IV of France, who at once revived the Catholic services in the royal palace at Whitehall.[21] We may then suppose that Shirley, as a Catholic, saw the means of a more lucrative employment as a dramatist. He moved to London, where he set up his residence at Gray's Inn, and began a brilliant career as a playwright which lasted until the year 1642, when the interdict was placed on the theatres.

His first play, *Love Tricks,* was acted in the year 1625; it was licensed by Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, " on February 10, 1624/5." It was not printed until 1631, and then under the title of *The Schoole of Complement. As it was Acted by Her Maiesties Servants at the Private House in Drury Lane.*[22] This play was evidently written some time before his conversion to Catholicity, for it shows none of that Catholic philosophy so pronounced in his later works; in fact, it has all the exuberance and effusiveness of youth, and may have been composed during his stay at Cambridge, or shortly after.

During the eighteen years which comprise his dramatic career

[21] Cf. Lingard, *History of England,* pp. 499 ff; Green, *op. cit.,* pp. 494, 495; Jusserand, *op. cit.,* III, p. 561.

[22] *Works,* iv; I, p. 2.

Shirley worked assiduously. Thirty-four plays [23] and seven masques and other "moral pieces" testity to his diligence. Besides these, he is said to have collaborated in two plays with Chapman, and later on in his life he assisted his friend and patron, Newcastle, in the composition of three plays. Sixteen other plays have from time to time been ascribed to him, in most cases with little or no foundation. That he became successful as a playwright is evident from Wood, who remarks that "he gained not only a considerable livelyhood, but also very great respect and encouragement from persons of quality, especially from Henrietta Maria, the queen-consort, who made him her servant." [24] His success, however, was considerably handicapped by the fact that, as he tells us himself, he "never affected the ways of flattery." No doubt it lost for him many a chance for preferment or advancement in social standing, and perhaps also accounts for the fact that he kept himself so much aloof from his fellow dramatists of the period.

His residence and work in London were interrupted for a time by his visit to Ireland. In 1633 a plague, more disastrous than usual, visited London, causing the closing of the theaters from May, 1636 to October, 1637. At the invitation of his friend John Ogilby, who was Master of the Revels at the court of the Lord Lieutenant in Dublin, Shirley went to Ireland early in the following year, 1636. This visit seems to have caused considerable speculation among his biographers; they consider it rather mysterious and assign various causes. Some think that the change of residence to Dublin was due to the prevalence of the plague; others are of the opinion that Shirley was

[23] Three are not extant: *The Tragedy of Saint Albanes, Looke to the Lady,* and *Bewties,* said to be the same as *The Bird in a Cage,* cf. Chapter IV of this dissertation, p. 73; Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 41-47.

[24] *Athenae Oxonienses,* III, 737. Most of Shirley's plays were presented by a company of players known as "her Maiesties Servants." In 1640, when the company disbanded, it was placed under a different management, and its name changed to that of the "King's Servants," or the "King's Men."—Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 130, 131.

forced to leave London on account of the adverse criticisms of society contained in his play, *The Ball,* produced shortly before. These circumstances may have influenced him to a certain extent; but other reasons can be assigned which seem to me more natural. The Earl of Strafford, then Lord Deputy of Ireland, "seems to have maintained almost a regal court at that time," in Dublin.[25] In conformity with the splendid program of amusement set by the court, Ogilby contemplated a new theatre in Werburgh Street, Dublin, the first to be founded in the British Isles, outside of London. There was less opposition to the theater in Ireland than in London, dominated as that city was by the Puritans. What is more natural, than that Shirley was interested in the new project? What is still more natural than that Ogilby, Master of the Revels and Shirley's friend, should obtain the services of the most popular playwright in London at that time to write a play for the "grand opening"? Furthermore, Shirley, as a Catholic, knew that the Irish people still adhered to their old creed; with the exception of the English settlers, the country was predominantly Catholic. Can we then not suppose that Shirley saw a chance to improve his income by an increase in the attendance by presenting a play based on Catholic traditions, as is his play of *St. Patrick for Ireland?* But the attempt to stir up a dramatic interest in Ireland on the part of both Ogilby and Shirley proved to be a failure; the sparse attendance at the performances was disappointing. He wrote several plays for the Dublin audiences, and wrote eight prologues for some other revised plays that were produced during his residence in Ireland.[26] His efforts were all in vain. But Shirley seems to have taken the empty houses as a mournful joke, judging from the prologue prefixed to one of the plays presented in Dublin at the time. There we read:

[25] Forsythe, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[26] Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.

> We are sorry, gentlemen, that with all pains
> To invite you hither, the wide house contains
> No more. Call you this term? if the courts were
> So thin, I think 'twould make your lawyers swear,
> And curse men's charity, in whose want they thrive
> Whilst we by it woo to be kept alive.[27]

Early in 1640 he returned to London and continued his dramatic work. His last play was *The Court Secret;* it was "never acted but prepared for the scene at Black-Friers." When the theatres were closed and the Civil War broke out in 1642, he entered the royal service under his generous patron the Earl, afterwards Duke, of Newcastle, whom, according to Wood, "Shirley did much assist . . . in the composure of certain plays, which the Duke afterwards published." [28] When the fortunes of war favored Cromwell and the Puritans at Marston Moor, July 2, 1644, and at Naseby, June 14, 1645, Newcastle hastily left England and remained abroad on the Continent for several years. Whether Shirley accompanied his friend and patron in this exile is very uncertain. Wood states that "after the King's cause declined, Shirley retired obscurely to London," [29] where for a while he was befriended by Thomas Stanley, the poet and philosopher.

From 1642 to 1666, a period of twenty-four years, Shirley lived a retired life as an humble school master in Whitefriars. During the enforced "silence of the stage" the playwrights and actors of the period, Dyce remarks, "resorted to various expedients in order to procure a subsistence." Besides the position of school teacher, Shirley's name appeared in other enterprises. In 1647 the dramas of Beaumont and Fletcher were published in collected form; to this edition Shirley wrote an address *To the Reader* in which he incidentally pays glowing

[27] *Works,* VI, p. 492.
[28] *Athenae Oxonienses,* III, p. 737.
[29] *Ibid.*

tribute to the inseparable collaborators.[30] A few years later, 1649, appeared his *Via ad Latinam Linguam Complanata, The Way made plain to the Latine Tongue,* in which the rules of agreement are *composed in English and Latine Verse: For the greater Delight and Benefit of Learners.* This was supplemented after a few years by other elementary works, *The Rudiments of Grammar* and *Manductio,* appearing in 1656 and 1660. In the meantime, Shirley had been searching diligently for the manuscripts of his former plays, which had been lost in the turmoil and confusion of the Civil War. Five of these appeared in 1653 in printed form, to which Shirley added a sixth, *The Court Secret,* that "happened to receive birth when the stage was interdicted, and wanted that public seal which other compositions enjoyed; though it hath been read and honoured with the allowance of some men, whose opinion was as acceptable to me, as the vote of a smiling theatre." [31] "To satisfy the importunity of friends," Shirley also published a collection of his masques and "other moral pieces." This small octavo volume appeared in 1659, and proved to be Shirley's last appearance as a dramatic poet. *The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses,* a masque, appearing last in the collection, contains the memorable lines that seem applicable to his own career:

> The garlands wither on your brow,
> Then boast no more your mighty deeds,
> Upon Death's purple altar now,
> See, where the victor-victim bleeds;
> Your head must come
> To the cold tomb,
> Only the actions of the just
> Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.[32]

The years 1665 and 1666 were memorable years in the his-

[30] *Works,* I, xlvi-xlviii.
[31] *Works,* V, pp. 428, 429.
[32] *Works,* VI, p. 397.

tory of England, on account of the terrible calamities that visited the country during that period. Abroad, the war with Holland was anything but favorable to the English arms, while at home a plague, during which "a hundred thousand Londoners had died in six months," was followed the next year by a fire that began "in the heart of London, and reduced the whole city to ashes from the Tower to the Temple." [33] It was in such a calamitous situation that Shirley met his death. The words of Wood, briefly describing the event, may thus form a fitting conclusion to the life of Shirley that I have endeavored to piece together from the various sources I have enumerated in the foregoing pages. "At length," the antiquarian relates, "he [Shirley] with his second wife Frances were driven by the dismal conflagration . . . from their habitation near to Fleet-Street in Middlesex, where being in a manner overcome with affrightments, disconsolations, and other miseries, occasion'd by that fire and their losses, they both died within the compass of a natural day: whereupon their bodies were buried in one grave in the yard belonging to the said church of St. Giles, on the 29th of Octob. in sixteen hundred and sixty-six." [34]

Addendum.

The foregoing is a reconstruction of the life of Shirley as we know it from the records and from biographies built upon them. After a careful study on the uncertain period of his life—1621-1624—the writer has been led to suggest the following hypothesis:

That at the time Shirley assumed the Mastership of St. Alban's Grammar School, it was in the hands of Catholic authority.

This Grammar School where Shirley taught is a free school founded during the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553). It is

[33] Green, *op. cit.*, pp. 628, 629.
[34] *Athenae Oxonienses*, III, p. 704.

situated beneath the church of St. Alban's, *infra ecclesiam Sancti Albani.* The Lady Chapel in the eastern part of the presbytery was converted to this purpose and has been used as such ever since.[35] This church of St. Alban's, as it is now called, was part of the celebrated Benedictine abbey of St. Alban's, founded in the year 786.[36] It escaped destruction at the dissolution of the abbey during the days of the Reformation, and in 1553, was purchased from the crown for £400 by the mayor and burgesses of the town, to be used as a parish church.[37] This was probably while Queen Mary was attempting to re-establish the Catholic religion in England.[38]

The brief account of Wood, referred to above,[38a] would indicate that Shirley's conversion to the Catholic faith and his appointment to the Mastership of the Grammar School are closely connected, that one is dependent upon the other. Baugh, quoting from the *Corporation Records* of the town of St. Albans, states that he had been promised the position at the school as early as 1618, that he began his tenure of office in 1621, and that he remained in charge until the close of the year 1624.[39] All the biographers, together with Wood, agree that his conversion took place prior to his acceptance of the position of schoolmaster. Jusserand states tersely: "Born in 1596, he [Shirley] studied at both the Universities, took orders, was converted to Catholicism, became a schoolmaster at St. Albans, then settled in London."[40] Forsythe is of the same opinion: "In January, 1621, he became headmaster of St. Alban's Grammar School. Having been converted to Catholicism, he gave

[35] Letter of the late Abbot Ramsay, Downside, England, to the author. Also cf. Clutterbuck, *History and Antiquities of the County of Hereford,* p. 48 ff.

[36] Dugdale, *Monasticon,* II, pp. 178-213.

[37] *Catholic Encyclopedia,* Vol. XIII, v. *St. Albans.*

[38] Cf. Dugdale, *op. cit.,* II, p. 207.

[38a] Cf. p. 37 of the dissertation.

[39] *Op. cit.,* p. 230.

[40] *Op. cit.,* III, 459.

up his position, July 21, 1624." [41] Nason does not commit himself; in fact, he doubts all the early life of Shirley until the year 1624, when he [Shirley] began his career as a dramatist in London.[42] Schipper, however, agrees with the others: "Denn bald danach trat er zur Katholischen Konfession über und übernahm eine Lehrerstelle an der von König Eduard VI gegründeten Lateinschule zu St. Albans." [43]

Taking all this evidence into consideration, the writer is led to suggest the hypothesis that the Grammar School in question must have been in the hands of Catholics, for, if one considers the religious condition of the times, it would seem impossible that a renegade Anglican minister would be invited to assume such an important position, if that post were at the disposal of the Anglicans.

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[41] *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

[42] "Concerning his [Shirley's] conversion to the Roman church, we have only what Dyce and other scholars have been pleased to discover in his works."—*Op. cit.*, pp. 32, 33-34.

[43] "Then soon after he embraced the Catholic communion and accepted a position as teacher in the Latin school at St. Albans which had been founded by King Edward VI."—*Op. cit.*, p. 3.

CHAPTER IV.

Shirley's Dramatic Works.

Outline.—The period of Shirley's activity is noteworthy—in politics, in religion, in literature—Printed editions of Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher—Shirley followed the conventionalized form of drama—his realism and romanticism—lack of Shakespearean nationalism—absence of references to religious contemporary quarrels—his loyalty to the king—he writes for the nobility and for the "groundlings"—Shirley not a plagiarist—characteristics of his works—Classified list of his plays—Tragedies, historical, romantic—Tragicomedies, pseudo-historical, of court intrigue, romantic—Comedies, of manners, or romance—Collaborated plays—Doubtful plays—Masques.

The period of Shirley's dramatic activity extended from the year 1624 to 1642, at which latter date the theatres were closed by law. This period is noteworthy in many ways. In the realm of politics there was evident a spirit of unrest; the democratic ideas advocated by the Puritans were gaining foothold in the minds and hearts of the common people. James I, hereditary king, died in 1625. Great hopes were entertained when his son, Charles I, ascended the throne; but these were quickly dispelled, when, following in the footsteps of his father, he maintained the same arbitrary policy towards Parliament, the sovereign power of the people. This, we have seen eventually brought about his death on the scaffold at Whitehall. In the field of religion, the influence of Henrietta Maria, the queen consort, in behalf of her Catholic co-religionists, was offset to a marked extent by the greater influence of the Anglican statesmen and the ever-increasing power of the Puritans. Catholics were still hazardously attending divine service and practicing their religion in secret. This tendency of unrest, or change, is amply manifest in the literature of the period.

About the time Shirley began to write there appeared the collected works of some of his illustrious predecessors. Jonson's collected works appeared in 1616, and Shakespeare's first edition was printed in 1623. That Shirley was aware of these printed folios is apparent in all his works. He himself had a hand in collecting and editing the works of Beaumont and Fletcher, which were published in 1647. Thus it may be said that Shirley fell heir to a vast mine of dramatic lore.

But it was a mine that had been thoroughly explored; every possible source for dramatic invention and inspiration had been thoroughly examined and exploited on the stage. The histories, not only of England, but of Greece and Rome, and other countries, had furnished a host of dramatic characters around which had been built those well-known dramas of Marlowe and Shakespeare. Human nature, with its innumerable humors and foibles, of every realistic shade and modification, had been the inspiration of his "acknowledged master" Jonson. Even the Italian *novelle,* so productive of romantic materials in the early Elizabethan period, had been exhausted.

A further instance of this dearth of dramatic material may be seen in the conventionalized form of the drama as it existed when Shirley began his career. Plays were then written on a conventionalized pattern, and their inspiration was drawn from conventionalized sources. True indeed, the influence of Shakespeare and Jonson on the writers of Shirley's time persisted, but it was on the wane and may be considered almost negligible. The romantic themes of Beaumont and Fletcher, couched at times in unbelievable extravaganzas, however, were exerting a strong influence on the playwrights of this particular decade. Hence it is that realism and romanticism both appear in the plays of Shirley with the latter more predominant in his later works.[1]

[1] For a complete treatment of the influences of the Elizabethan dramas on Shirley cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.*,; Thorndike, *Tragedy. The Types of English Literature;* Prölss, *Das neuere Drama der Engländer,* pp. 210 ff; Koeppel,

A characteristic of the Shirlian plays, however, that has not been noted heretofore is that they contain but little of that nationalistic atmosphere so pronounced at times in Shakespeare, especially in his historical dramas. Shirley indeed shows a loyalty to his king and his country, but it is the loyalty of one who respects and obeys the civil authority, who is patriotic, not from hypocritical prudence or the hope of preferments, but from conscientious conviction. A national patriotism that was fomented by the hatred for France and Spain, which was the aim and ambition of Elizabeth to inculcate, does not appear in Shirley's works. Another characteristic of his work that has received but scant cognizance in the past is the utter lack of reference to the religious bickerings and quibblings so prevalent at that time, and so pronounced in other writers. On the contrary, Shirley takes the drama as he finds it; makes use of the materials at hand, conventionalized as they were; disregards the religious tendencies of the times, and it becomes his medium for inculcating lofty religious principles of morality and Christian ethics. In this respect, Shirley's dramas are unique; in this characteristic he stands alone.

In judging the works of Shirley it may be well to remember that he wrote for the times in which he lived. Play writing was to him a source of income, a means of subsistence, as was the case with other writers of the period. He therefore was compelled to mould his productions in such a form as to make them acceptable to his audiences. The words of Lope de Vega, contained in the essay on dramatic technique prefixed to his works, in which he pleasantly excuses himself for this same practice, may be applied to Shirley:

> Y escribo por el arte que inventaron,
> Los que vulgar aplauso pretendieron—

Shakespeare's Wirkung, pp. 54-55; Ward, *op. cit.*, III, p. 94; Neilson, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 223; Schipper, *op. cit.*, pp 345 ff.; Schelling, *op. cit.*, II, p. 323.

Porque como los paga el vulgo, es justo
Hablarle en necio para darle gusto.[2]

Hence it is that we find so much in Shirley that seems to echo a similar passage in other Elizabethan writers. These "borrowings" have led some of his critics to accuse him of plagiarism. The reason for this is because Shirley made use of the stereotyped, the conventionalized forms of the drama current in his time. No one reading the plays of Shirley can fail to notice the influence of his predecessors; at one time the echoes from Shakespeare appear overwhelming; while in another play we may say that he owes all to Jonson and Fletcher. "Let any play of Shirley's," says Forsythe, "save *The Arcadia,* be compared with fifty earlier dramas, and the poet will be judged an arrant plagiarist. Let, however, the Shirlian play be considered in its relations to the entire earlier Elizabethan drama, and its author will be seen in his true light as a conformer to things as they were, whose originality lies not in his material, but in his use of it, and as a writer who preferred morality [in the Caroline sense] and some degree of probability to originality and novelty." [3]

Before dealing with the individual dramas of Shirley a brief consideration of a few of the chief characteristics of his plays may not be out of place.

Eighteen of Shirleys genuine plays, not including those written in collaboration, are laid in the courts of foreign lands, chiefly Spain and Italy. The leading characters of the main plots,—kings, queens, dukes, duchesses, princes—are appropriate to their courtly settings. The characters of the other dramas are principally of the higher class of society. This

[2] "I wrote according to the art which was invented by those who desire the common applause, for since the common people pay for them [the dramas] it is no more than just to speak to them in common language in order to gratify their taste." Quoted by *The London Magazine* (May 1820), p. 525.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

gives them a romantic atmosphere, reminding one sometimes of Shakespeare, and sometimes of Fletcher. Only in certain comedies, which show the influence of Jonson, does Shirley bring in characters from the ranks of the common people of England. In his characterization of these he is different from Shakespeare and the other Elizabethans, who, in order to please their aristocratic audiences, generally made sport of the people, introducing the small merchants and country farmers in a pall-mall of clowns and yokels. In Shirley's time these same people were beginning to realize that they, and not the court people, were really the nation. Shirley seemed to realize this particular state of affairs, and this may give some interpretation to his remark that he "never affected the ways of flattery." He indeed has his comical characters, but these are taken as a general rule from the common walks of life; they are not caricatures; they do not belong to the same class as the Shakespearean creations of this sort. They are chiefly the foolish gentleman, the *parvenu* citizen, or the poltroon, such as one meets in almost every town or city. They are realistic in our modern interpretation of the term.[4]

As regards the plots of his plays Shirley follows the custom of the times. In general his plays consist of a double plot, one of a serious nature, the other comical; he even at times goes so far as to employ the device of a triple plot or action. There are, however, a number of plays which can be considered as having but a single action. *The Maid's Revenge, The Politician, The Cardinal, The Royal Master, The Court Secret, The Humorous Courtier,* and *The Coronation* may be cited as examples in this respect. In a number of others the sub-plot is so closely interwoven with the main action and the characters are

[4] In this respect it might be well to mention that Shirley uses but six characters that can be classed as clowns, namely: Pazzorello in *The Young Admiral,* Bombo in *The Royal Master,* Rodamant in *St. Patrick for Ireland,* Georgio in *The Gentleman of Venice,* Pimponio in *The Opportunity,* and Piperollo in *The Sisters.*

so cleverly intermingled that these, too, may be added to the single-plot group. Shirley sometimes, like Shakespeare, uses the characters comprising the secondary plot only to break up the monotony, the heaviness, of the main action so as to obtain a variety of interests. "As a general rule," remarks Forsythe, "a well unified plot is a characteristic of Shirley's plays." [5]

Love in all its variegated phases generally forms the theme of Shirley's plays, though at times it is very much subordinated to other motives, for instance, revenge or hatred. Sometimes a pretended love forms the chief *motif,* while the genuine, the true love, is kept in the background.[6] Rivalry in love as a general rule forms the main theme for his tragicomedies and a number of the romantic plays.[7] Sometimes the conflict between love and honor, or love and friendship, or love and ambition, forms the main action.[8] In scenes of love and passion the Elizabethans are generally prone to forget the bounds of decency. But in this respect, Shirley seldom errs in a flagrant manner. His plays invariably bring out some wholesome lesson of morality; in general, they may be said to have always a moral or cultural basis on which the structure of the drama stands. He never tires, for instance, of using the constancy of love between husband and wife, the purity of the affection between the lover and his beloved, as a *motif.* Virtue is invariably triumphant, and chastity in the maiden is frequently the cause of the conversion of the roué or the libertine lover. It cannot be denied in this respect that Shirley's plays at times show a certain moral incongruity, a kind of ethical obtuseness, that they portray these moral and ethical principles in a light which would be questioned according to our present-day standards; he was but using the conventionalized form of the time.

[5] *Op. cit.,* p. 53.

[6] E. g., *The Humorous Courtier.*

[7] E. g., *The Young Admiral, The Duke's Mistress, The Opportunity, The Royal Master, St. Patrick for Ireland, The Imposture.*

[8] E. g., *The Maid's Revenge, Love's Cruelty, The Coronation.*

But grossness is never introduced for its own sake; it is not dragged into the plot as being risqué. Indeed, "in spite of occasional lapses [which are to be found in the plays of every Elizabethan dramatist] it cannot be said that Shirley was by any means consistently immoral in conception or gross in language." [9] For a writer who was evidently thoroughly acquainted with the works of his predecessors, and who wrote at a time when sensation of some sort was almost a necessity in a play, Shirley has kept singularly clear of that element, in as far as it may be considered a theatrical device.

In the following pages it is not my intention to enter into a detailed critical discussion of each of Shirley's plays; they have been frequently treated in this respect by scholars in the past, and are therefore generally well known to the special students of English literature. But for the completeness of this monograph it will be necessary to note them briefly. A few points that have a bearing on his Catholic philosophy of life, overlooked in the past, will need mentioning. In the following classification I have departed somewhat from the usual chonological method employed by critics in discussing Shirley's plays. I have endeavored to arrange the thirty-eight productions directly ascribed to Shirley himself, in as far as it was possible, into definite groups or classes. The following classified list will therefore enable the reader at once to judge in what kind of plays Shirley was most proficient:

TRAGEDIES.

Historical:

St. Albans.

Romantic:

The Maid's Revenge.
The Traitor.
Love's Cruelty.
St. Patrick for Ireland.
The Cardinal

[9] Forsythe, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

TRAGICOMEDIES.

Pseudo-historical:

The Young Admiral.
The Coronation.
The Doubtful Heir.
The Court Secret.
The Politician.

Of Court Intrigue:

The Grateful Servant.
The Duke's Mistress.
The Royal Master.
The Opportunity.
The Imposture.
The Gentleman of Venice.

COMEDIES.

Of Manners:

Love Tricks, or The School of Complement.
The Wedding.
The Brothers.
The Witty Fair One.
Changes, or Love in a Maze.
Hyde Park.
The Gamester.
The Example.
The Lady of Pleasure.
The Constant Maid.
Looke to the Lady.

Of Romance:

The Humorous Courtier.
The Bird in a Cage.
Arcadia.
The Sisters.

COLLABORATED DRAMAS.

The Ball [with Chapman].
Chabot [with Chapman].
Captain Underwit [with Newcastle].

DOUBTFUL PLAYS.

Dick of Devonshire.
The Nightwalker.
Double Falsehood.
A Yorkshire Tragedy.
The Faithful Friends.
The Laws of Candy.
The Nice Valor.
The General.
Andromana.
Love's Pilgrimage.

MASQUES.

The Triumph of Peace.
The Contention for Honour and Riches.
The Triumph of Beauty.
Honoria and Mammon.
Cupid and Death.
The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses.

TRAGEDIES.

Historical Tragedies—A cursory glance over the foregoing classification shows at once the absence of the historical drama so much in vogue in the early days of the Elizabethan era. In this respect Shirley follows the custom of the times. Chronicle and historical plays were almost out of fashion by the time he began to write. Ford, in the *Prologue* to *The Chronicle Historie of Perkin Warbeck,* printed in 1634, makes the following pertinent remark:

> Studies have of this nature been of late
> So out of fashion, so unfollowed . . . . . .

A few sporadic attempts at this style of drama were made after Shakespeare's masterpieces had appeared,[10] but these were more or less tinged with so much romantic flavor as to overshadow the genuine historical character of the play. A reason for this may be assigned in the diffusion of the Jonsonian doctrine, the "empirical" tenets of his school, that advocated a realistic presentation of an event or a character. Chronicles, too, were read with more deliberation; the historical events of the past had been studied and were better known, and hence the writers were obliged to adhere more closely to the truth and to give less play to their fancy. Playwrights realized that truth and dramatic effect frequently conflict. Shirley seems to have been aware of this, for in his realistic comedy *Hyde Park* (1632) the disdainful Carol ironically says to her lover:

> . . . I had rather hear the tedious tales
> Of Holinshed, than anything that trenches
> Of Love." (A. I. sc. 2)

Among all the genuine productions of Shirley we find but one that may be considered in this class, and this can be discussed only on the basis of conjecture, for the text of the play is not extant. It is *The Tragedy of St. Albans* which was entered in the Stationers' Register on February 14, 1639/40. That it was an attempt on the part of Shirley to write an historical tragedy seems certain. Fleay suggests that it dealt with the life of Clanrickard, Earl of St. Albans, or of Francis Bacon, Viscount St. Albans,[11] while Nissen thinks that the town itself, or the life of Hubert de Burgh, Earl of St. Albans [the Clanrickard mentioned by Fleay] furnished the theme for the play.[12] Forsythe too is of the opinion that it was historical; he suggests that it was "a sort of miracle play . . . based on the life of Alban the first British martyr." In support of his theory he

[10] Cf. Schelling, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 306-308.
[11] Cf. *Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama*, II, p. 244.
[12] *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

states that "Shirley's clerical profession, his conversion to Catholicism, and the influence of *The Virgin Martyr,*[13] together with the existence of *St. Patrick for Ireland,* make still stronger the presumption that this tragedy dealt with a saint's life. We can therefore, I think, safely place it among the historical tragedies.

What became of the manuscript and why it was not printed is uncertain. Forsythe conjectures that it was probably produced in Ireland between 1636 and 1639/40, and that "Shirley, finding the tragedy about to be published on his return from Ireland, suppressed it, possibly on account of dissatisfaction with the play."

This is partly true; but we must remember also that the play was evidently founded on some event connected with Catholic history, that it smacked of "popery," and would, therefore, find little favor in London, where the Puritans were about to place the interdict on the theaters, and where Catholics were still hazardously practicing their religion in secret. This, I think, would furnish a better reason for its final suppression.

Early English tragedy showed a decided classical influence. *Gorboduc,* the first tragedy on an English subject, although written "on models furnished by Seneca," showed the first signs of revolt from the classics. At the commencement of the Elizabethan era proper, tragedy underwent greater change. Playwrights, among them Shakespeare, shook off the restraint and trammels of the classical precedent, and introduced the element of romance. Two of the earlier tragedies, Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy,* ran wild with an exuberant romantic spirit and gave a powerful impetus to a long line of similar productions. As Schelling says: "Elizabethan tragedy is overwhelmingly romantic."[14] There is, however, a marked difference between the romantic tragedies of

[13] Written by Massinger about 1620, and printed in 1622.

[14] *Op. cit.,* I, p. 549.

the Shakespearean era proper and those of a few years later. Tragic scenes and events were then staged on the battlefield or out in the open woods, but now they are carried on within the confines of a small court or palace, usually Italian. This was owing principally to the influence of Beaumont and Fletcher, who, as Schelling says, "brought tragedy indoors, transferring the prevailing scene from the field to the court, and putting behind them once and for all the old and awkward methods of the chronicle play." [15]

Romantic Tragedies—The tragedies therefore that Shirley wrote cannot be considered historical, in the strict sense of the term. Romantic tragedies, in which the imagination holds sway over the unreal and ephemeral, will convey to the reader a clearer idea of the nature and content of the Shirlian dramas.

The first of these, *The Maid's Revenge,* was licensed February 9, 1625/26, and produced at the private house in Drury Lane by Her Majesty's servants. In the dedication to Henry Osborne, Esq., when the play was printed in 1639, Shirley uses the words that he "never affected the ways of flattery: some say I have lost my preferment, by not practicing that Court sin." This evidently refers to an incident that happened prior to the year 1639, and has not reference to anything antedating its production. Shirley refers to *The Maid's Revenge* as the "second birth of this kind." Whether these words mean the second tragedy or the second dramatic production cannot be determined with certainty. The plot, which is laid in Portugal, is "founded on a story in Reynold's God's Revenge against Murder (B. II, Hist. 7), entitled *Antonio and Berinthia,* which Shirley has in general followed very closely." [16] Revenge, therefore, is its chief *motif*. The play, mediocre at times, shows that it is an early dramatic attempt of the author.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 601; for an interesting treatment of Romantic Tragedy, cf. *ibid.*, I, pp. 548-606.

[16] *Works,* I, p. 100.

Furthermore, it contains very little of the Catholic teaching so pronounced in his later works.[17]

Shirley's second tragedy, *The Traitor,* was a vast improvement over his first venture. The skill of the dramatist, manifest in the plot construction, reminds the reader of *Othello,* although there is nothing in the play of that intensive internal struggle noticeable throughout the Shakespearean masterpiece. The play was licensed May 4, 1631, and printed in 1635. It is dedicated to William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, Cavalier General under Charles I, whom Shirley later assisted in the production of several plays. It was revived in the year 1692, but this time it was ascribed to Rivers, the Jesuit, who is supposed to have composed it while in Newgate prison.[18] Regarding the authorship by Rivers, Gosse says: "It is not impossible that Shirley may have visited his co-religionist in prison, and may have accepted from him some hint of the plot. . . . The versification, the arrangement of scenes, the morality, all belongs to Shirley and to Shirley only." [19] The source is generally considered to be *XII Novel* of the *Heptameron* of Margaret of Navarre, which details the murder of Duke Alessandro de Medici by his kinsman Lorenzino.[20]

In the fall of the same year appeared Shirley's third romantic tragedy, *Love's Cruelty,* produced in the private house in Drury Lane. It was licensed November 14, 1631, and printed in 1640. It is dedicated to the young brothers George and Charles Potter, grandsons of Endymion Potter, patron and friend of Jonson and Milton. It is interesting to note that both boys became soldiers and fought as Cavaliers under the banners of the king at Marston Moor. Langbaine assigns a two-fold source to this

[17] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 221-222; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 313-314; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 22-25 for synopsis and critical comment.

[18] Motteux, *The Gentleman's Journal* (April, 1692), p. 21.

[19] *James Shirley,* Mermaid Series, xviii.

[20] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 152-164; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 198-220; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 44-50 for synopsis and critical comment.

play, namely, *Novel XXXVI* of the *Heptameron* of Margaret of Navarre, and *Novel 6, Decade III,* of the *Heccatomithi* of Cinthio.[21]

The information regarding Shirley's next venture in the field of romantic tragedy, *The Politician,* is not positive. Critics do not agree as to its exact identification. Fleay,[22] Schipper,[23] and Neilson [24] are of the opinion that it was produced in Ireland about the year 1639. Others confuse it with another play, *The Brothers,* of 1626, or with *Dick of Devonshire,* generally ascribed to the Earl of Newcastle.[25] Forsythe thinks that the signification the Elizabethans attached to the word "politician"—"a shrewd schemer," "a statesman"—can be applied better to Gotharus, leading character for evil in *The Politician,* than to Don Carlos, the protagonist of *The Brothers.* Certainty, therefore, as to its positive identification seems out of question. The play was not licensed by the Master of Revels, but was published as *The Politician* in 1655, as "presented at Salisbury Court by her Majesties Servants." [26] In this tragedy Shirley forsakes the romantic soil of Italy and lays the plot at the court of the King of Norway. The insatiable ambition of Gotharus, abetted by his mistress, Marpisa, forms the theme of the drama. The source of the story, according to Langbaine, occurs in the first book of *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania,* by Lady Mary Worth, a niece to Sir Phillip Sidney. It was published in 1621.[27]

St. Patrick for Ireland, the next play to be considered, I have

[21] *Dramatic Poets,* pp. 480-481; cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 164-173; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 224-226; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 50-58 for synopsis and critical comment.

[22] *Anglia,* VIII, p. 410.

[23] *Op. cit.,* pp. 242-243.

[24] *Cambridge History of English Literature,* VI, p. 225.

[25] Cf. Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 47-69; Ward, *History of English Dramatic Literature,* III, p. 104.

[26] *Works,* V, pp. 90, 91.

[27] *Dramatic Poets,* p. 481; also cf. Sir Sidney Lee, *Dictionary of National Biography,* LXIII, pp. 161 ff., for an account of Lady Worth and the *Urania.*

placed in the class of Romantic Tragedies on account of the serious and spiritual dignity of style with which the subject is treated, together with the fatal, tragic ending of some of the leading characters. It has never received due justice at the hands of the critics. A closer study of the play in the light of the historical and religious background at the time of its production will, I hope, lead the reader to form a juster estimate of this peculiar play.

It was entered in the Stationers' Register on April 28, 1640, but we do not possess any definite date of its production.

The theme of the drama is the conversion of Ireland to Christianity; hence, the conflict between the forces of paganism represented by the Druid arch-priest Archimago, and Christianity, championed by St. Patrick, is ever before the reader; the latter finally carries off the palm of victory.[28]

The style and spirit that Shirley evidently intended for the entire play is revealed to us in the first act, when the alarm of the Druids is represented as St. Parick approaches,

> a pale man coming from the sea,
> Attended by a tribe of reverend men.

But Shirley did not maintain the lofty dramatic style of this scene; had he done so, the play would undoubtedly have been unique in the Elizabethan period. Instead of this, with the skill of a genius, he manipulates his material so as to represent the moral depravity of the " mere " Irish, their absurd notions of poetry, and the infamies of their early religion, for the delectation of his Anglo-Irish audience, while he adroitly keeps the main theme, the conversion of Ireland, in the background. This seems to have hampered his genius, for he misses many a chance for genuine dramatic effect. For instance, the play is taken up a great deal with the intrigue of the Prince Corybreus

[28] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-222; Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 313-314; Schipper, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-213; Eglinton, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-58 for synopsis and critical comment.

to win Milcho's daughter, Emeria. At last he disguises himself as a god, whom she, still a pagan, worships; when, however, he attempts her chastity, she stabs him to death. In this very incident, could Shirley have made Emeria, an otherwise interesting character, in her holy wrath, raise her hand against a god, she would have become a symbol of the revolt of a pure human nature against obscene superstition.[29] Still there are a number of really dramatic scenes in the play which seem in conformity with its lofty theme, scenes which must have thrilled the hearts of the few Irish Catholics among the audience. One notable instance is the incident (A. V, sc. 3) in which St. Patrick prophesies the future greatness of Ireland's learning:

> This nation
> Shall in fair succession thrive, and grow
> Up the world's académy, and disperse,
> As the rich stream of human and divine
> Knowledge, clear streams to water foreign kingdoms;
> Which shall be proud to owe what they possess
> In learning to this great, all-nursing Ireland."

Gosse says that "*St. Patrick for Ireland* is a failure, but it is the failure of a man of genius; it is Shirley's one divergence into the region of pure eccentricity." [30] A Catholic historical play written for a Protestant audience in the seventeenth century could not be anything but a failure. This also accounts for the fact that Shirley failed to produce the "second part" he promises in the *Prologue*. The chief interest of the play, according to Eglinton, is that "it enables us far better than a good many of the acknowledged sources for the period to realize how the Anglo-Irish felt towards their country on the eve of the Rebellion." [31]

Shortly before the closing of the theaters in 1642, Shirley

[29] Cf. Eglinton, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
[30] *Op. cit.*, xxiv.
[31] *Op. cit.*, p. 65.

produced *The Cardinal,* generally considered one of his best dramatic productions. Schipper, however, is of the opinion that, on account of its poor motivation and its comic epilogue, which spoils the tragic effect produced, it should occupy only a secondary rank.[32] It was licensed November 26, 1641, produced by the King's Men at the private house in "Black Fryers," and published in 1652/53. A struggle for revenge forms the *motif* of the action, in the attainment of which both the cardinal and the duchess die together. It was revived after the Restoration.[33]

TRAGICOMEDIES.

When tragedies of an historical or semi-historical nature became unpopular with the Elizabethan audience, a new species of drama came into vogue. This was known as tragicomedy. The term, according to Professor Schelling, is a misnomer, a contradiction, "for the dramatic conflict between the will of the protagonist and universal law cannot be conceived of as at once a triumph and an overthrow for each of the contending principles. Nor can the mere infusion of a comic episode or two, or even the relief of a somber tragic plot by an underplot or comedy, be said logically to justify the appellation tragicomedy." When Shirley began his dramatic career, the word was used to "denote a romantic drama involving serious passion, yet ending happily." It was strictly an invention of the Elizabethan period, and it can be defined as "a romantic drama characterized by an originality of subject-matter and, outside of the heroical romance and plays involving adventure and the supernatural, by a general adherence to the course of human experience and to contemporary manners. It was fond of Italian names and places, but often preserved

[32] ". . . dies Stück gehört nach unserer Meinung nicht zu seinen besten Dramen."—*Op. cit.,* p. 258.

[33] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 185-189; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 344-361; Schipper, *op. cit.* pp. 251-260 for synopsis and critical comment.

the local flavor of a particular source, thus producing a fine verisimilitude." [34] It was in this style of play that Shirley found a great source of inspiration.

Pseudo-historical—In the classification I have given above, I have placed four of Shirley's tragicomedies in the pseudo-historical group, because they maintain an historical atmosphere throughout.

The Young Admiral was licensed July 3, 1633, and enjoyed the unique distinction of being presented at a court entertainment, November 19, 1633, at which Charles I and Henrietta Maria, the queen-consort, were present. It was highly recommended by Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of Revels, as "free from oaths and profaneness . . . a pattern to other poets, not only for the bettering of manners and language, but for the improvement of the quality which hath received some brushings of late." [35] Stiefel maintains that it is an adaptation of the Spanish play *Don Lope de Cardona,* by Lope de Vega,[36] but, strange to say, he offers no parallel passages to maintain his assertions. The plot deals with an emotional struggle wherein the hero must decide between the love of his wife and patriotism, and his father must determine whether he will battle against his son as a rebel to his country, or whether he himself will suffer death. Through the agency of feminine courage a happy *dénouement* is produced.[37]

The Coronation was licensed February 6, 1634/35. It was entered in the Stationers' Register on April 25, 1639, and published in 1640 as the work of John Fletcher. In 1652 it was

[34] Schelling, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 182, 191.
[35] Malone, *Shakespeare,* III, p. 232.
[36] *Romanische Forschungen,* V, p. 196.
[37] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-199; Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-252; Schipper, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-112 for synopsis and critical comment.

republished by Shirley himself with the note "Falsely ascribed to Jo. Fletcher." [38]

The Doubtful Heir was one of the plays presented at the new theatre in Dublin during Shirley's stay in Ireland. Here it was produced under the title of *Love's Victory.* It was licensed in London, June 1, 1640, as *Rosania,* and finally appeared in print as *The Doubtful Heir* in 1652. This play shows the influence that Fletcher had on Shirley. A remarkable feature of the play is the rather frequent reference to prayer and its efficacy, especially prayers for the dead, showing the author's characteristic of inculcating Catholic religious principles.[39]

The Court Secret, the last of Shirley's plays, was written too late to escape the Puritan interdict on the theatres. The author, however, published the play in 1653. It was not until after the Restoration, April 18, 1664, that it was first produced as a new play according to the account of Pepys.[40] The play is remarkable for the intricacy of its plot, involving a double imposture, combining to a high degree the elements of suspense and surprise, so much lauded by Coleridge in the plays of Shakespeare.[41]

Tragicomedies of Court Intrigue—Six of the tragicomedies I have listed separately, since they deal principally with amorous intrigues of the court life in the petty Italian states in which their action is laid. They are differentiated from the foregoing group inasmuch as they do not even have a semblance of an historical character.

[38] Cf. Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75; also pp. 270-274; Forsythe, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-313; Schipper, *op. cit.*, 159-167 for synopsis and critical comment.

[39] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-220; Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-330; Schipper, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-205 for synopsis and critical comment.

[40] *Diary,* IV, p. 206; also Langbaine, *Dram. Poets,* p. 475.

[41] Cf. Coleridge, *Complete Works* (ed. 1884), IV, p. 61; also cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-254; Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 371-380; Schipper, *op. cit.*, pp. 280-290 for synopsis and critical comment.

The first of these is *The Grateful Servant,* originally licensed as *The Faithful Servant,* November 3, 1629. It appeared in print in 1629, in 1637, and again in 1655. It is an ingenious play in which the spirit of sacrifice and self-abnegation on the part of Foscari, the hero, struggles with his desire to secure the happiness of his beloved. Leonora, disguised as the page Dulcino, in the title rôle, must choose between love and gratitude. A happy disposition of fate brings a well-merited reward to the principals for their self-renunciation. In spite of the indelicacy of its subplot, it is a glorification of virginal purity and marital chastity. That the standard of morality was different from what it is today may be gleaned from the lines of Massinger prefixed to the printed edition. This author, himself a Catholic, in spite of the ethical incongruities of the play, could say that the play contained

> No obscene syllable, that may compel
> A blush from a chaste maid.[42]

Another point worthy of mention, that has a bearing on what I intimated above regarding Shirley's connection with St. Alban's, is that this play makes frequent references to the Benedictines, which indicates that Shirley was well acquainted with the traditions of the order.[43]

The Duke's Mistress, licensed January 18, 1635/36, and printed in 1638, was the second of Shirley's plays that was honored with a presentation before the court. In the *Prologue* Shirley intimates that he desires to raise the standard of morality prevalent in the dramas of his times. "Wantonness," he says,

[42] *Works,* I, xiii.

[43] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 261-268; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 191-197; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 37-44 for synopsis and critical comment.

Though old, if in a new dressing it appear,
Will move a smile from all—but shall not here.[44]

The Royal Master, presented before the Lord Deputy of Ireland, in Dublin, January 1, 1638, is the most interesting of this group of tragicomedies. It was licensed in London, April 23, 1638. Shirley's conception of virtuous womanhood brought out in this play is, according to Schelling, " much above that of Fletcher, and measurably superior to Massinger." [45] Stiefel maintains that the source of this play is a Spanish drama,[46] while Miss Ott derives the story of Domitilla and the King from the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, X, 7.[47] This is the drama selected by Schipper for his German translation.[48]

The Opportunity, which Schipper calls the *Verfehlte Gelegenheit,* was licensed November 29, 1634, and published in 1640. It was one of the plays to be revived after the Restoration. The action of the play deals with the conventionalized situation of mistaken identity. According to Stiefel it was an adaptation of *El Castigo del Penséque,* by Tirso de Molina,[49] and, strange to say, Forsythe maintains that the *Penséque* is taken from *La Ocasion Perdida,* by Lope de Vega. *The Opportunity* was presented at the University of Illinois in 1906, with marked success.[50]

[44] *Works,* IV, p. 191. Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 199-205; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 280-286; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 182-188 for synopsis and critical comment.

[45] The date of its presentation is a disputed fact; cf. Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 109-114; Schelling, *op. cit.,* II, p. 321.

[46] *Romanische Forschungen,* V, p. 196.

[47] *Die italienische Novelle im englischen Drama,* pp. 34-44.

[48] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 205-213; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 291-200; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 191-200; 363-445, for synopsis, critical comment and translation.

[49] *Op. cit.,* V, p. 193 ff.

[50] Cf. *The Nation,* Vol. LXXXII (Jan. 1, 1906-June 30, 1906), p. 491; also cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 297-304; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 263-270; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 147-159 for synopsis and critical comment.

The Imposture, licensed November 10, 1640, and printed in 1652, seems to be a recasting of two of his former plays, *The Royal Master* and *The Maid's Revenge.* It is a play sprightly and full of action, but based on a plot involving deception by means of impersonation carried to a high degree of improbability.[51]

The Gentleman of Venice was licensed October 30, 1639, presented at the Salisbury Court Theatre, and printed in 1655. In the last act of this play, a situation is introduced which Shirley has handled in true Catholic fashion. Cornari intends to kill Florelli. The latter wishes to see a priest before his death. Cornari, disguised as a Black Friar, enters. Steeped in crime though he may be, still he does not attempt to abuse the sacred tribunal of the confessional. "This has no shape of a confession," he warns Florelli, and receives in reply the words, "Nor do I, under that holy seal, discourse a story." [52]

Comedies.

With the growing popularity of the tragicomedy in the Elizabethan era, the elemental distinction between comedy and tragedy as understood by the ancients, became gradually obscured. Tragicomedy was invented principally to satiate the craving for novelty, and still satisfy the desire for a happy solution for all the difficulties of a complex plot. Later on, when the French influence became predominant in England, this evolved itself into the "heroic play" of the Restoration. Comedy, on the contrary, became almost entirely a satire, witty at times and pungent, of the manners and customs of the day. This "comedy of manners" has become the most persistent species of drama in the English language, and, with the ro-

[51] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 240-248; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 330-335; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 260-271 for synopsis and critical comment.

[52] *The Gentleman of Venice,* A. V. sc. 2; Works, V, p. 75; Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 231-240; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 305-307; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 222-230 for synopsis and critical comment.

mantic drama, forms one of the two most permanent types. Shirley found a most fertile field for the exercise of his genius in handling this kind of play. In this respect he is somewhat like Jonson, but less didactic, and somewhat like Massinger, but with less tendency towards rhetorical flourish and inflated language. All of Shirley's comedies of manners take place in or about the city of London.

Comedies of Manners—The first of his plays which I have placed in this class served as an introduction of Shirley to the London public. *Love Tricks, or The School of Complement,* is a composite of a comedy of manners, a tragicomedy, and a pastoral. It may be placed in what Polonius, in *Hamlet,* calls the "tragical-comical-historical-pastoral" play. It was licensed February 10, 1624/25, and was evidently produced before the death of King James I.[53]

Shirley's second comedy of manners, *The Wedding,* at once placed him in the front rank of the dramatists of his time; it seems to have been immensely popular. The exact date of its first production is uncertain. The first printed edition appeared in 1629; it was reprinted in 1633, and a third time in 1660. It was revived after the Restoration with great success. A note in the Gifford-Dyce edition of Shirley's works, referring to the words, "That I desire to be confessed" (A. I, sc. 2), informs the reader that he "must bear in mind that Shirley was a Roman Catholic, a circumstance which will account for this and other allusions to the usages of that religion." [54]

The Witty Fair One, a comedy of London life in the strict Jonsonian style, was licensed October 3, 1628, and published in 1632. In the main plot of this play, the principle of climax and surprise is cleverly employed, while in the subplot the sit-

[53] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-136; Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-174; Schipper, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-27 for synopsis and critical comment.

[54] *Works,* I, p. 371; cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-231; Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-181; Schipper, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-37 for synopsis and critical comment.

uation introduced is decidedly *risqué,* even for those days of dramatic unrestraint. It is however well handled, and is not allowed to usurp an undue amount of attention from the audience.[55]

Changes, or Love in a Maze, is true to its name, for it is indeed a medley, a maze, of incidents, loosely joined together. It was licensed January 10, 1631/32, and published the following year. In his dedication Shirley departs from the "acknowledged custom, that to men such poems are presented" and inscribes the play to Lady Dorothy Shirley, "the youngest [sic] of the two daughters of the unfortuunate Earl of Essex, and wife of Robert Shirley, Bart."[56] Although our author bore the same name, he was in no way connected with this family. In Chapter III, I have shown that he did not descend from a noble ancestry, but from an obscure London family of the same name. The play was revived after the Restoration.[57]

A very popuular play of Shirley's, before the days of the Commonwealth, was *Hyde Park,* licensed April 30, 1632, and printed in 1637. Its action centers in the races [apparently of men as well as of horses] which society folk attended. The race track was situated in the then rural district of Hyde Park. It is especially interesting today as a study of contemporary manners and customs.[58]

The Gamester, licensed November 11, 1633, was presented at the Court in the presence of royalty, February, 1633/34. It was the third of Shirley's plays to be accorded such a distinction. "The king sayd it was the best play he had seen for seven years."[59] The plot of the play is said to have been sug-

[55] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 331-342; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 402-403; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 29-32 for synopsis and critical comment.

[56] *Works,* II, p. 271.

[57] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 342-349; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 226-227; Schipper, op. cit., pp. 59-67 for synopsis and critical comment.

[58] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 349-356; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 227-230; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 84-91 for synopsis and critical comment.

[59] *Works,* III, p. 185.

gested by King Charles I himself; this, perhaps, accounts for the above remark.[60] Langbaine derives the source of *The Gamester* from the *Ducento Novelle* of Malespini (Pt. II, *Novelle 96*) and from the *Heptameron* of Margaret of Navarre (I, *Novelle 8*).[61]

The Example, which Swinburne considered "the best of Shirley's comedies," was licensed June 24, 1634, and published in 1637. In the *Prologue* Shirley seems to sense the approaching doom of the English drama at the hands of the Puritans.

> We have named our play
> *The Example,* and for aught we know, it may
> Be made one; for at no time did the laws,
> However understood, more fright the cause
> Of unbefriended poesy.[62]

To the modern reader this play is far more acceptable than *The Gamester.*[63]

The Lady of Pleasure is a stinging rebuke for the extravagance, the drunkenness, and the licentiousness of the aristocratic *élite,* the *haute monde,* of the time. The entire play shows Shirley as a kind of preacher, a reformer, who wishes to inculcate the severest lessons of morality. Dyce considers it "the most brilliant of Shirley's purely comic dramas."[64] Aretina, in the title rôle, is a genuine prototype of Sheridan's

[60] Cf. Malone, *op. cit.*, III, p. 236; Forsythe, *op. cit.*, pp. 357-365; Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-258; Schipper, *op. cit.*, 112-121 for synopsis and critical comment. *The Gamester* was presented by Charles Johnson in 1711 as *The Wife's Relief, or the Husband's Cure;* again in 1758 by Garrick as *The Gamesters,* and finally in 1827 as *The Wife's Stratagem or More Frightened than Hurt,* by Poole. Dyce, *Account,* xxii.

[61] *Cambridge History of English Literature,* VI, p. 202.

[62] *Works,* III, p. 282.

[63] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-371; Nason, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-262; Schipper, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-147 for synopsis and critical comment.

[64] *Works,* xxxiii.

Lady Teazel in *The School for Scandal.* The play was licensed October 15, 1635, and printed in 1637.[65]

It is very probable that *The Constant Maid,* renamed *Treue Liebe* by Schipper, was one of the plays produced in Dublin. It does not appear to have been licensed by the Master of Revels, but it is entered in the Stationers' Register on April 28, 1640, the same day as that of *St. Patrick for Ireland.* This, according to Schipper, argues the fact that it was not presented in London before the Restoration.[66] The theme of the play is the old adage that " the way of true love never did run smooth." [67]

Looke to the Lady, one of Shirley's lost plays, was entered in the Stationers' Register on March 11, 1639/40. The phrase, " Look to the Lady!" occurs in *The Politician* (A. V., sc. 2).[68]

Comedies of Romance—The five plays, briefly discussed here, I have classed as Romantic Comedies, partly because of their superficiality and want of seriousness in the general treatment, and partly because their *raison d'être* is merely pleasurable amusement.

The first of this group, *The Brothers,* enjoys the distinction of being the subject of a great deal of speculation on the part of the critics. It was licensed as early as November 4, 1626, but did not appear in print until 1652. Its identity seems rather uncertain. Fleay maintains that it is the same as *The Politic Father* produced in 1641,[69] while Nason is of the opinion that the original play was lost, and that this play can " be identified neither with *The Brothers* of 1652 nor with *Dicke of*

[65] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 371-379; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 276-280; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 167-177 for synopsis and critical comment.

[66] *Op. cit.,* p. 213.

[67] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 379-390; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 314-319; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 213-221 for synopsis and critical comment.

[68] *Works,* V, p. 172; Cf. Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 66-104.

[69] *Anglia,* VIII, p. 405-406, 410-411.

Devonshire." [70] The play can almost be considered a Tragi-comedy, but seems to lack that seriousness of treatment which characterizes the other plays in that group.

The Humorous Courtier, according to Nason, was licensed as *The Duke,* on May 17, 1631.[71] It was published in 1640. Orseolo, the humorous courtier at the court of Parma, in the rôle of a reformer, chastises, in a more or less comic fashion, human baseness, which proceeds from heedless selfishness and morbid ambition.[72]

A good picture of the times, showing the attitude of the Puritans towards the stage and its defense by the dramatists, is furnished by the history of the events which brought *The Bird in a Cage* into existence. *The Histriomastix; the Player's Scourge,* by William Prynne, appeared in 1632. The outrageous penalty inflicted upon the hapless author seems to have been inflicted more on account of the implied libel against Queen Henrietta and her court ladies, who had attended the presentation of Shirley's masque, *The Triumph of Peace,* than on account of Prynne's attack upon the stage. This penalty shows more the temper of the times than the malignity or magnitude of the offense.[73] Shirley had written a play called *The Bewties,* which was licensed January 21, 1632/33. It is a pure Fletcherian extravaganza. Malone thinks that Shirley, wishing to repudiate the charge against the queen, changed its name to that of *The Bird in a Cage* [Prynne was in prison at

[70] *Op. cit.,* pp. 166, 169, note. Also cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 255-261, and Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 25-29.

[71] *Op. cit.,* pp. 222.

[72] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 279-286; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 222-223; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 230-240 for synopsis and critical comment.

[73] Prynne was sentenced to lose both his ears, to be branded on the cheeks with the letters 'S. L.' [Seditious Libeller], to pay a fine of five thousand pounds, to be expelled from Lincoln's Inn, to be deprived of his scholastic degrees, and finally to be imprisoned for life. Cf. Thompson, "Puritans and the Stage"—*Yale Studies in English,* Vol. XX (1913), pp. 159-178.

the time of its presentation] and adapted the play itself to suit the circumstances of the moment.[74] This seems to be a plausible explanation for the ironical dedication addressed to Prynne, and the satirical allusions to contemporary laws and customs with which the play abounds. Gratitude to his royal patron, Queen Henrietta, who "made him her servant," would almost justify Shirley's bitter attack. The play is not registered by the Master of Revels, but the circumstances under which it was written no doubt point to about the year 1632 for its production.[75]

The Arcadia, designated "a pastorall" by Shirley himself, was presented to celebrate the birthday of the king, November 19, 1632. It was printed in 1640. It is modeled on Sidney's pastoral romance of the same name and shows how closely Shirley follows his chosen material.[76]

The last of Shirley's plays to be licensed in the pre-Restoration period was *The Sisters.* It was presented, according to his own account, "when London is gone to York." It was licensed April 26, 1642, and printed in 1652. The play is remarkably free from licentious allusions and presents a contrasting picture of pride and humility.[77]

Collaborated Dramas.

Contrary to the custom in vogue among the dramatists of the period, Shirley seldom united with others in the production of his dramas. We know of but two plays, *The Ball,* licensed November 16, 1632, and *Chabot,* licensed April 29, 1634, in which Shirley is considered a co-worker, and in these his name

[74] Cf. Malone, *op. cit.,* III, p. 232; also Fleay, *op. cit.,* II, p. 239 ff.; *Anglia,* VIII, p. 407.

[75] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 286-297; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 245-247; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 75-84 for synopsis and critical comment.

[76] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 268-279; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 242-245; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 67-75 for synopsis and critical comment.

[77] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 313-321; Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 362-372; Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 271-280 for synopsis and critical comment.

is linked in a positive manner with that of George Chapman. It is not necessary here to enter into a discussion regarding how much Shirley contributed; generally speaking, we may say that *The Ball* is chiefly Shirley's, and *Chabot,* except for a few changes, is mainly Chapman's.[78]

Shirley's contribution to *Captain Underwit,* also called *The Country Captain,* is more uncertain than in the other two plays. The play has been ascribed to the Duke of Newcastle, whom, as Wood states, Shirley assisted in the "composure of certain plays which the Duke afterwards published."[79]

Doubtful Plays.

Other plays that have at one time or other been ascribed to Shirley, prompted perhaps by the desire of some scholars to find an author for plays that have been considered anonymous, are the following: *Dick of Devonshire,* licensed November 4, 1626;[80] *The Nightwalker, or The Little Thief;*[81] *Double Falsehood, or The Distressed Lovers;*[82] *A Yorkshire Tragedy, The Faithful Friends, The Laws of Candy, The Nice Valor, The General,*[83] *Andromana* and *Love's Pilgrimage.*[84]

Masques or "Moral Pieces."

This species of entertainment, very much in vogue in the days of Elizabeth, is, strictly speaking, not a dramatic produc-

[78] Cf. Nason, *op. cit.,* pp. 83-89; Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 407-410, 417-419; Schipper, pp. 91-105, 177-182; Parrott, *Plays and Poems of George Chapman,* Intr. to *The Ball,* p. 869.

[79] *Athenae Oxonienses,* III, p. 739; also cf. Halliwell, *Dictionary of Old English Plays,* p. 42; Bullen, *Old English Plays,* II, p. 231; Fleay, *op. cit.,* I, pp. 48-49.

[80] Fleay, *Anglia,* VIII, pp. 405, 406. The anti-Catholic and the anti-Spanish sentiments expressed in the play are ample proof that it is not Shirley's.

[81] This play was written by Fletcher and revised by Shirley. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* p. 414.

[82] Genest, *op. cit.,* III, pp. 203-204.

[83] Cf. Schipper, *op. cit.,* pp. 240.

[84] Cf. Forsythe, *op. cit.,* pp. 403-433 for full account of the doubtful plays.

tion; it is merely an elaborate show, a pageant, with an allegorical signification. One of those written by Shirley, when he was in the heyday of his dramatic career, shows significantly the temper of the times. *The Triumph of Peace* was given February 3, 1634. It was considered "the most magnificent pageant ever perhaps exhibited in England, a procession and masque in which the four inns of court united to honor their king and to show their detestation of the tenets of Prynne and such as thought with him, recently set forth in the notorious diatribe *Histriomastix.*" [85] The elaborate presentation was in the hands of Inigo Jones, who later on presented Milton's *Comus.* Shirley's masque, when presented, was witnessed by Queen Henrietta and her court ladies, much to the scandal of the Puritans; to repudiate this, Shirley wrote his ironical attack on Prynne, contained in the printed edition of *The Bird in a Cage.*[86]

The Contention for Honour and Riches, referred to by Shirley as "a useful Moral," was never intended to be acted; it was printed in 1633. In 1659 it was republished, with the title changed to *Honoria and Mammon.*[87]

The Triumph of Beauty, appended to the 1646 edition of Shirley's *Poems,* was probably presented by the school boys of Whitefriars, where he taught school during the days of the Commonwealth.

Cupid and Death, one of Shirley's latest productions, was presented at a special entertainment tendered "his Excellencie, the Embassadour of Portugal, Upon the 26 of March, 1653." [88]

The last literary production with which the name of James Shirley is connected is *The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses*

[85] *Works,* xxxiii; Schelling, *op. cit.,* II, p. 131.
[86] *Works,* II, pp. 367-368.
[87] *Works,* VI, pp. 2, 287.
[88] *Works,* VI, p. 343.

for the Armour of Achilles, founded on the 13th book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* It was printed in 1659. This piece contains those memorable lines indirectly immortalizing the tragic death of his royal patron, Charles I.

> The glories of our blood and state
> Are shadows, not substantial things;
> There is no armour against fate;
> Death lays his icy hand on kings:
> Scepter and crown
> Must tumble down,
> And in the dust be equal made
> With the poor crooked scythe and spade.[89]

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[89] *Works,* VI, pp. 396-397.

CHAPTER V.

Shirley's Catholic Philosophy of Life.

Outline.—Shirley, as a Catholic, desires to reform the abuses of his time—his Catholicity manifest in seven distinct points—Marriage—the Catholic doctrine—references to its indissolubility—faithfulness of the spouses—the priest, as its official minister—solemnization in the church and the publication of the bans—Confession—a unique Catholic practice—references to confession in time of sickness—Prayer, a practice not specifically Catholic—Shirley's references to prayers for the dead—Catholic Monachism—references showing Shirley's genuine sympathy with the religious state—Loyalty and obedience to civil authority—the "divine right" of kings—Shirley's loyalty prompted by Catholic conviction—the Catholic teaching on the "divine right of kings"—Chastity and purity of womanhood—references to these virtues—Hope of reward after death—Shirley's attitude towards death—Shirley's Catholicity amply manifest in *Verses.*

In the foregoing Chapters I have given a brief sketch of James Shirley, the dramatist, representing him as he is generally known to the special students of English literature. In this respect, he is classed as the "last of the Elizabethans." His biographers invariably agree that he became a member of the Catholic Church at the very commencement of his dramatic career, and that "throughout the remainder of his days he steadily adhered to the new faith which he had conscientiously embraced." [1]

But Shirley not only lived as a Catholic; he thought and wrote as one, and always inculcated Catholic principles in his works. In spite of the fact that his plays were flavored to a certain extent with the lax morality of the Elizabethan era, they not only served to amuse the audiences, but were intended for

[1] *Works,* Intr. viii.

their edification, and the ultimate correction of their morals. His realistic comedies of London life, as well as the tragedies and tragicomedies of romance, reflect a philosophy of life based on the teachings of the Catholic Church. But even apart from passages undoubtedly Catholic, his works reveal an anxiety to inculcate moral principles, as is evident from a passage in *The Duke's Mistress.* Horatio, who is endeavoring to dissuade his friend Bentivolio from his evil ways, complains, "You mind not my instructions." "Not I," nonchalantly replies his friend. To which Horatio replies:

> These lectures have I read to the city
> With the same success; that gentlemen might live honest,
> And have luck to father their own children,
> But 'twill not be![2]

The same idea of reforming the abuses of his times seems to be expressed in *The Royal Master,* in which Shirley frequently refers to the favorites, the parasites, who constantly surrounded the king so that he could hear nothing "but what their flattery and partial tongues convey to his ear . . . but I may

> In time dissolve these court mists, that so long
> Have hung upon't and render the king's eyes
> Free to distinguish objects, if there be
> No witchcraft exercised upon his senses."[3]

His first two plays, *Love Tricks* and *The Maid's Revenge,* show little or none of the unmistakable Catholic teaching that characterizes his later works. This teaching, however, becomes more pronounced as he advances in his art. Those points that specifically manifest his Catholicity which I have discovered after a careful study of all his plays, may be grouped under the following headings:

1. Indissolubility of the marriage vow and the faithfulness of the spouses towards each other;

[2] Act. II, sc. 1.
[3] Act I. sc. 1.

2. Necessity of confession to a priest for the remission of sins and the alleviation of the sin-burdened conscience;
3. Persistency and constancy of prayer;
4. Appreciation of and sympathy with Catholic monachism.

Other points, not specifically a feature of Catholic doctrine and practice, though in Shirley they may be termed so from the emphasis he places on them, are the following:

5. Loyalty and obedience to civil authority:
6. Chastity and purity of womanhood;
7. Hope of reward after death.

Before illustrating these points by citations from his plays, I wish to draw attention to the following observation which must be borne in mind in judging Shirley's Catholicity as expressed in his dramas.

Shirley's romantic tragedies and tragicomedies are, with two exceptions, invariably laid in Italy or Spain, countries that were at that time thoroughly Catholic. It is to be expected that Shirley, artist as he was, would produce the Catholic atmosphere, customs, and practices in the countries in which his characters are represented as moving. But even in his realistic comedies, where the plot is laid in the non-Catholic atmosphere of contemporary London, we note the same Catholic tone. This is not so apparent at first, but as he progresses in his art and feels more sure of his ground, the Catholic tone increases until it almost becomes a dominant characteristic in his later plays.

1. *Marriage.*

The Catholic Church has always been considered unique among all the other churches, as regards her doctrine on matrimony, and her teaching is easily recognizable. Unity and indissolubility are peculiar qualities of the marriage contract in the teaching of the Catholic Church, and to these she has firmly adhered in spite of all opposition, since the days of her foundation by Jesus Christ.

The influence of the Catholic Church in respect to marriage was considerably lessened during the Elizabethan period with the establishment of lax marriage laws, which made divorce easy. Consequently, when the sacredness of the marriage tie was impugned, infidelity among married persons, cuckoldry, adultery, harlotry, and licentiousness of every description soon became rampant—a well-known characteristic of the age.[4]

Furthermore, the Catholic Church has always taught that marriage is a sacrament, not merely a civil contract; the church alone has jurisdiction over the administration of the sacraments, and, consequently, it follows that Christian marriages are subject exclusively to the laws of God and of the Church.

Shirley makes twenty-one distinct references to the various phases of the Catholic doctrine and practice on matrimony, to its indissolubility, to the faithfulness of the spouses towards each other, to the priest as the official witness of the ceremony, to the publication of the bans, and to the church as its proper place of celebration.

In *The Duke's Mistress,* when the love of Leontio for his wife Euphemia has grown cold and he threatens to cast her aside, she says:

> Though with contempt he look upon me now,
> His blood may clear, and he return to challenge
> Euphemia's piety. Our vow was made
> For life, my lord, and heaven shall sooner fall,
> And mixing with the elements, make new chaos,
> Than all man's violence and wrath upon me,
> Betray one thought to break it.[5]

Again, in *The Doubtful Heir,* Rosania complains to her husband Ferdinand:

[4] Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia,* Vol. IX, v. *Marriage;* also cf. Ryan, "Marriage," in *Readings in Ethics,* pp. 773-777; Leo XIII, "The Evils that Flow from Divorce," *Ibid.,* pp. 778-779.

[5] Act III, sc. 3.

> Our vows have made us one; nor can the names
> Of father, country, or what can be dear
> In nature, bribe one thought to wish myself
> In heaven without your company.[6]

Faithfulness of the married couple to each other is inculcated in *The Politician,* when the lecherous king, goaded on in his passion by the degenerate Gotharus, presses the virtuous Albina to become his paramour, and she reminds him of his wife, the queen, to whom he has but lately been espoused, and urges him to remain faithful to her:

> You have a queen, to whom your vow is sacred;
> Be just to her; the blessing is but warm
> Pronounced by th' holy priest; stain not a passion
> To wander from that beauty, richer far
> Than mine; let your souls meet, and kiss each other
> That while you live the examples of chaste love
> (Most glorious in a king and queen) we may
> Grow up in virtue by the spring of yours
> Till our top-boughs reach heaven.[7]

The priest as the official witness for the ceremony of marriage, and its solemnization in the church, is frequently referred to in Shirley's works. Here we have a practice that is distinctly Catholic. Nor are these references to be found only in the romantic plays where the plot is laid in Italy or Spain, Catholic countries where we would naturally expect Catholic customs to be observed. In the comedy of London life, *Love in a Maze,* Aurelia says to Gervase Simple:

> He'll know precisely when we must be married,
> Is jealous of delays, will not believe
> I love him, till the priest hath seal'd me his
> I' the church.[8]

[6] Act II, sc. 3.
[7] Act I, sc. 1.
[8] Act III, sc. 1.

In one of his most popular domestic comedies of London society, *The Gamester,* Shirley makes a careful distinction between the different ministers for the marriage ceremony. One, the parson, seems to have the faculty, not only to marry people, but to divorce them as well, while "our clergyman" does not enjoy the latter privilege. In a scene in which Mr. and Mrs. Wilding are quarreling over the love that evidently once existed between them, Mr. Wilding says: "I do not like you," and is answered by his wife, "You did marry me." To these words her husband pointedly remarks:

> Yes, I did marry you, here's too much record for't;
> I would there were a parson to unmarry us!
> If any of our clergy had that faculty,
> He might repair the old, and build as many
> New abbeys through the kingdom in a twelvemonth.[9]

In *The Traitor,* a romantic tragedy, Shirley again speaks of the marriage ceremony as a function to be performed in the church, and shows that it evidently was a practice of the Catholic Church at that time.

> Will heaven divorce us ere the priest have made
> Our marriage perfect? we in vain hereafter
> Shall hear him teach, that our religion
> Binds to have the Church's ceremony.[10]

2. *Confession.*

The traditional belief in and practice of confession has ever been deeply rooted in the mind of the Catholic Church. Her doctrine in this respect is explicit; she teaches that it is "a sacrament of the New Law instituted by Christ in which forgiveness of sins committed after baptism is granted through

[9] Act I, sc. 1.

[10] Act IV, sc. 2. For other passages referring to marriage, cf. the following: *The Witty Fair One,* Act V, sc. 5; *The Wedding,* Act II, sc. 2; *Ibid.,* Act V, sc. 2; *The Grateful Servant,* Act V, sc. 1; *Love's Cruelty,* Act II, sc. 3; *Ibid.,* Act IV, sc. 2; *Hyde Park,* Act IV, sc. 3; *The Cardinal,* Act I, sc. 2.

the priest's absolution to those who with true sorrow confess their sins and promise to satisfy for the same." [11]

It is called "a sacrament," not simply a mere perfunctory ceremony. It is the "self-accusation of a penitent made to a priest with a view of obtaining sacramental absolution." Consequently, according to the teaching of the Catholic Church, it is necessary that "for the forgiveness of sin in the sacrament of Penance the sinner must in sorrow confess his sin, and then it will be forgiven by the absolution of the priest." [12] It is therefore not made in the secrecy of the penitent's heart, nor to a layman as a friend, nor to a representative of human authority, but to a duly ordained priest with requisite jurisdiction and with the "power of the keys," that is, the power to forgive sins which Christ granted to His Church.

The members of the Anglican Church in its beginning also practiced a certain form of confession, as is evident from the rules laid down in the *Prayer Book* in this respect. This, however, is a secret confession made within the penitent's own heart, which is followed by a general absolution without the direct mention of the sins committed. The formula of absolution is similar to the one used in the Catholic Church.

Shirley has many references to this unique practice of the Catholic Church in his plays, references that are thoroughly Catholic. In these there is no reference to a secret confession made within the penitent's own heart and followed by a general absolution; with him it seems to be the practice as it is and always was in vogue in the Catholic Church.

I have already pointed out in a foregoing Chapter how delicately Shirley handled the situation which arose in *The Gentleman of Venice,* when Florelli asks for a priest before he is to be murdered by the Venetian. When the announcement is made to Florelli that he is to die, he begs "for leave to dis-

[11] *Catholic Encyclopedia,* Vol. XI, v. *Penance.* Also cf. Slater, *A Manual of Moral Theology,* II, pp. 143-232.

[12] Slater, *op. cit.,* II, pp. 163, 145.

charge the weight of many sins into the bosom of some confessor" before the event takes place.[13]

In *The Brothers,* when Ramyres is taken suddenly ill, and fear is entertained for his recovery, a priest, true to Catholic custom, is immediately sent for. Francisco tells the physician:

> . . . there is more than your skill required
> T'instate a health; your recipes, perplex'd
> With tough names, are but mockeries and noise,
> Without some dew from heaven, to mix and make them
> Thrive in the application.

The servant who enters assures Francisco, "I am sent for the confessor, the doctor fears him much." [14]

Penelope, in *The Wilty Fair One,* after the conversion of Fowler, her libertine lover [a familiar *dénouement* in Shirley's plays], urges him to repentance,

> Go home, and pray
> Thy sin may be forgiven, and with tears
> Wash thy polluted soul . . . Be man again! [15]

When Marwood, in *The Wedding,* expresses his intention "to be confessed," Dyce calls the reader's attention to the fact "that Shirley was a Roman Catholic, a circumstance which will account for this and other allusions to the usages of that religion, introduced into several of his plays, the scenes of which are laid in England." [16]

Furthermore, in *The Traitor,* Shirley refers to the enormity and the malignity of sins as a subject for penitence, reminding one of the well-known passage from the prophet Isaias (I, 18), "if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool."

[13] Cf. Act V, sc. 2.
[14] Act IV, sc. 1.
[15] Act IV, sc. 4.
[16] *Works,* I, p. 371, note.

> But is heaven's stock of mercy spent already,
> That sins, though great and horrid, may not be
> Forgiven, to the heart that groans with penitence?
> Are the eternal fountains quite seal'd up?" [17]

3. *Prayer.*

Prayer in general, according to the teachings of the Catholic Church, may mean "any pious affection by which the mind and the heart are raised to God." [18] In a more specific sense it is "an act of religion which consists of asking proper gifts or graces from God." [19] In this respect it can be said to be a universal practice of almost all religious beliefs, and not peculiar to the Catholic Church. All Christians, in some form or other, pay to the Almighty Creator this form of worship. For the Catholic, however, it assumes a more positive significance. The devout Catholic prays throughout the day. It permeates his entire existence.

A special feature of this practice of prayer, characteristic of the Catholic Church, is that she has always taught that prayers can and should be said for the dead. This implies the belief in Purgatory as a temporary state where the souls of the just are detained until they are cleansed from their sins.

All through his works Shirley teaches the persistence and constancy of prayer. The references are too numerous to recount here; a few citations, however, will suffice to show Shirley's emphasis on this form of Christian worship of the Almighty.

Prayers according to Shirley, are to be said on all occasions and for various necessities: in time of temptations as a pro-

[17] Act IV, sc. 1. For further references to the practice of confession cf. the following: *The Politician*, Act I, sc. 1; *The Court Secret*, Act V, sc. 2; *Ibid.*, Act V, sc. 3; *The Brothers*, Act I, sc. 1; *Ibid.*, Act IV, sc. 1; *The Wedding*, Act I, sc. 2; *Ibid.*, Act II, sc. 3; *The Grateful Servant*, Act IV, sc. 5; *The Royal Master*, Act IV, sc. 1.

[18] Slater, *op. cit.*, I, p. 209.

[19] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIII, v, *Prayer.*

tection against impurity, for the recovery of the sick, for the conversion of the libertine—all well-known Catholic practices.

Thus, in *The Witty Fair One,* Penelope admonishes her lover that

> holy thoughts
> Like fumes of sacred incense, hovering
> About his heart, then thou would'st learn to be
> Above thy frailties, and resist the flatteries
> Of smooth-faced lust.[20]

When she sees signs of approaching death in his face she assures him:

> My prayers shall beg a mercy on your soul,
> For I have no encouragemeent to hope
> Your glass hath many sands.[21]

We have another reference to the same point in *The Duke's Mistress,* when Euphemia says to Leontio when hearing of Valerio's death:

> Although he were not kind to take his leave,
> I would pay my obsequy of tears upon
> His herse and weep a prayer to his cold dust.[22]

4. *Catholic Monachism.*

Shirley's frequent references to the religious state, and his views of monachism, are fully in harmony with the teaching of the Catholic Church in this respect. According to her doctrine "the state of marriage is indeed good, and Jesus Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament, but the state of vir-

[20] Act V, sc. 3.

[21] Act IV, sc. 4.

[22] Act IV, sc. 4. For additional references to prayer cf. the following: *The Maid's Revenge,* Act II, sc. 5; *The Brothers,* Act V, sc. 3; *The Wedding,* Act III, sc. 3; *The Grateful Servant,* Act I, sc. 2; *The Gentleman of Venice,* Act V, sc. 2; *The Imposture,* Act II, sc. 3; *The Court Secret,* Act IV, sc. 2; *The Coronation,* Act IV, sc. 2.

ginity is better." [23] For such as wish to follow Christ more securely and to dedicate their lives entirely to God, not only celibacy and absolute chastity are proposed, as in the case of the secular clergy, but a life apart from the world is recommended. This state of religion, or monachism, as it is called, is not a precept; it is embraced voluntarily. Those who follow this counsel of perfection renounce all the riches and pleasures of the world, and live retired lives in a monastery or convent. As an institution, the religious state, or monachism, has been practiced in the Catholic Church from early times, and has always received her whole-hearted support.

Shirley's residence at St. Alban's, in which Benedictine traditions were still persistent in spite of the Reformation and its evil consequences to monachism, no doubt furnished him with the opportunity of becoming better acquainted with this feature of the Catholic faith.

The high concept which Shirley evidently had for the religious state is forcibly shown in *The Grateful Servant.* The following reference shows a deep insight into the very spirit of monachism that could only come from a genuine sympathy with the life of a religious. It is to be embraced, not from a mere whim or notion, but after careful thought and deliberation. This is the sentiment contained in the admonition of the Abbot to Foscari, who, with Dulcino, has applied for admission into the Benedictine Order.

> You must take heed the ground of your resolve
> Be perfect . . . Yet look back on the spring
> Of your desires. Religious men should be
> Tapers, first lighted by a holy beam:
> Meteors may shine like stars, but are not constant.[24]

Furthermore, Shirley, according to the teaching of the Catholic Church, considers the religious state, the renunciation of the

[23] Slater, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 653-656.
[24] Act V, sc. 2.

world by means of vows that bind for life, one of counsel, not of precept. "Every man is not bound to be religious," says good-natured Bombo to Bomitilla in *The Royal Master.*

Again in *The Sisters,* Angellina asks her lover, Vergerio,

> May we not
> Without so strict forsaking of the world
> Be capable of blessing, and meet heaven
> At last, though erring nature guide sometime
> Out the nearest way?

To which Vergerio replies: "Why yes, Angellina." [25]

A note of warning to those who have embraced the clerical state and have preached the word of God is to be found in *The Cardinal* in words with which the king refers to the unfortunate prelate.

> When men of gifts and sacred functions, once decline
> From virtue, their ill deeds transcend example.[26]

To such of the clergy as would meddle with affairs of state, to the prejudice of their own duties, the Duchess remarks to the Cardinal:

> Leave, leave, my lord, these usurpations,
> And be what you were meant, a man to cure,
> Not let in, agues to religion:
> Look on the church's wounds.[27]

These are but a few of the numerous references to monachism that I have noted in Shirley's works, in all of which he adheres

[25] Act IV, sc. 3.

[26] Act V, sc. 3.

[27] Act II, sc. 3. For further reference cf. the following: *The Brothers,* Act I, sc. 1; *Ibid.,* Act II, sc. 1; *Ibid.,* Act IV, sc. 1; *The Wedding,* Act V, sc. 2; *The Grateful Servant,* Act II, sc. 1; *Ibid.,* Act III, sc. 3; *The Imposture,* Act II, sc. 1; *Ibid.,* Act I, sc. 3; *The Court Secret,* Act III, sc. 2; *St. Patrick for Ireland,* Act III, sc. 1; *Ibid.,* Act V, sc. 2; *The Gentleman of Venice,* Act V, sc. 2; *The Cardinal,* Act III, sc. 1; *The Maid's Revenge,* Act V, sc. 3.

strictly to the teaching of the Catholic Church, and manifests in them all a genuine sympathy.

5. *Loyalty and Obedience to Civil Authority.*

The Catholic Church has always maintained that all public and legitimate authority is of divine right, "in the sense that God is the author of man's nature by which he is a social animal, formed to live in society, which necessarily implies a distinction of rulers and ruled." [28] It matters not whether this authority is inherited, or whether it is acquired by the choice of the people. The Catholic Church teaches that the authoritative power of an individual who rules, or of a group of individuals, as the case may be, is derived from God, the Author of man's nature and of human society. The citations I shall give below may be questioned at first sight as being merely Christian, and not particularly Catholic. It was not surprising that a dramatist, writing for an audience whose more influential section was composed of the court circles, who thoroughly believed in the "divine right of kings," should frequently express loyalty to the throne. But in Shirley there are many passages revealing a loyalty to his sovereign as the seat of constituted authority that seems to spring from conviction, and Catholic conviction, rather than from mere prudence.[29]

In all his references Shirley always shows a sincere loyalty to the king, but it is not the loyalty of the sycophant, that fawns and cringes before authority to obtain favors. He could not commit the "court sin of flattery," to which he refers as "the stalking horse of policy." [30]

[28] Slater, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 297-298.

[29] For the Catholic idea of loyalty to civil authority cf. the following; Leo XIII, *Encyclical Letter* (Jan. 10, 1890); Billot, "The Moral Origin of Civil Authority," in *Readings in Ethics*, pp. 900-905; Ryan, "The Right of Self Government," *Ibid.*, pp. 933-943.

[30] *The Maid's Revenge*, Act II, sc. 1.

This idea is illustrated in *The Young Admiral* when Vittori says:

> Subjects are bound to fight for princes (they) are
> Not bound to reward of every service . . . .
> Honor pays double
> Where kings neglect, and he is valiant truly
> That dares forget to be rewarded.[31]

Although Shirley always shows a respectful deference to the king, he does not agree with him in his interpretation of the theory of "divine right" that Charles, following the policy of his father, James I, and the advice of Archbishop Laud, favored even to his own destruction. In this respect Shirley seems to follow more the teaching of Cardinal Bellarmine and Suarez, the two great Catholic theologians of the time.[32] The great objection to the interpretation the Stuarts placed on the "divine right," and consequently to all who advocated State absolutism, "is that they fail to distinguish between authority (undifferentiated) and its distribution, between generic power and its specific embodiments." [33] The Catholic Church teaches that all *power,* power in general, in short all such authority as is essential for man's complete social life, comes from God. But not all *powers* are from God; that is, the concrete apportionment of authority; this is a matter of human arrangement.

Shirley follows this Catholic attitude rather than the Jacobean version of the theory. For instance, in *The Young Admiral* Vittori, in spite of the threatened banishment, says:

> It was
> Articled in the creation of my soul
> I should obey, and serve my country with it
> Above myself; death is a great excuse for't.
> No, he shall see I am a soldier

[31] Act I, sc. 2.

[32] For the full text of the "Oath of Allegiance" demanded of all Catholic subjects by James I, cf. Taunton, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 103, 104.

[33] O'Rahilly, "Suarez and Democracy," in *Readings in Ethics*, p. 927.

> And dare be just; say he should torture me,
> Shall wickedness be strong in punishment,
> And we not be as valiant in our suffering![34]

That the stand Shirley took in regard to this loyalty and obedience was the subject of considerable criticism at the court may be gleaned from the following quotation from *The Traitor,* in which Lorenzo, speaking of his prince, utters the following significant words:

> Although he be
> My duke, and kinsman, I abhor his vices,
> Howe'er the world, without examination,
> Shoot their malicious noise, and stain my actions,
> 'Tis policy in princes to create
> A favorite, who must bear all the guilt
> Of things ill managed in the state; if any
> Design be happy, 'tis the prince's own . . . .
> O the religious days
> Of commonwealths, we have outlived that blessing.[35]

Another reference to the same point is to be found in *The Cardinal:*

> How much are kings abused by those they take
> To royal grace, whom, when they cherish most
> By nice indulgence, they do often arm
> Against themselves; for whence this nation springs,
> None have more need of perspectives [telescopes]
> than kings.[36]

To Shirley, as a Catholic, "princes are here the copies of eternity"; [37] their authority is but the symbol of the almighty power of God Himself in the universe. That our author did not always agree with the apportionment of that power, with

[34] Act III, sc. 1.
[35] Act II, sc. 1.
[36] Act IV, sc. 2.
[37] *The Coronation,* Act I, sc. 1.

the use the king made of that God-given authority, is amply manifest from the citations I have quoted, and from,

> When
> Princes break faith, religion must dissolve
> And nature groan with the burden of the living.[38]

6. *Chastity and Purity of Womanhood.*

Shirley never seems to tire of inculcating the lessons of purity. His emphasis upon this virtue, reflects the enormous import which the Catholic Church places upon its practice. Furthermore in true Catholic fashion, he does not teach morality by dwelling on the luridness, the shamefulness of its vices, but by picturing in the most beautiful terms the opposite virtues of purity, modesty, and chastity. To these he sometimes refers directly by naming the said virtues themselves; at other times, he includes them all under the general term of virtue. These references are so numerous in his works, that it will suffice for our purpose to cite only some of the most striking passages.

True beauty, so much prized in womankind, he says, is not of the body, of bodily charms, but of the soul.

> The truest wealth
> Shines from the soul, and draws up just admirers.[39]

Again,

> Thou art richer in all thy chastity than all
> The kings of earth can make thee.[40]

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[38] *The Imposture*, Act I, sc. 1. For further references to loyalty and obedience cf. the following: *The Opportunity*, Act III, sc. 2; *Ibid.*, Act V, sc. 2; *The Coronation*, Act II, sc. 3; *Ibid.*, Act V, sc. 2; *Ibid.*, Act V, sc. 3; *The Royal Master*, Act I, sc. 1; *Ibid.*, Act I, sc. 2; *Ibid.*, Act III, sc. 3; *Ibid.*, Act V, sc. 1; *The Duke's Mistress*, Act V, sc. 2; *The Cardinal*, Act IV, sc. 2; *Love's Cruelty*, Act I, sc. 2; *The Young Admiral*, Act III, sc. 1; *Ibid.*, Act IV, sc. 5.

[39] *The Lady of Pleasure*, Act I, sc. 1.

[40] *Love's Cruelty*, Act III, sc. 3.

Again we read:

> True beauty
> Is mocked when we compare thus, itself being
> Above what can be fetched to make it lovely
> Or, could our thoughts each something to declare
> The glories of a face, or body's elegance
> That touches but our sense; when beauty spreads
> Over the soul, and calls up understanding
> To look [what] thence is offered and admire.[41]

With beauty, and above all chastity, are the qualities "that can make woman lovely to man's soul." [42]

Innocence of soul is the armour that

> Bids
> Defiance to a storm, against whose ribs
> The insolent waves but dash themselves in pieces
> And fall and hide their heads in passionate foam.[43]

When Hippolito, in *Love's Cruelty,* would persuade Eubella to surrender her virginity to the Duke in order to procure court preferments, she exclaims:

> Is chastity and innocence no treasure?
> Are holy thoughts and virgin purity
> Of so small value? where is your religion?
> We were created men and women to
> Have command and empire o'er the creatures,
> And shall we lose our privileges, our charter,
> And wilfully degrade ourselves or reason
> And pity, to live like beasts, nay, be such?
> For what name else can we allow ourselves?
> Hath it been held in every age a virtue
> Rather to suffer death than stain our honour?
> Does every sin strike at the soul and wound it,
> And shall not this, so foul, as modesty
> Allows no name, affright us? [44]

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[41] *The Lady of Pleasure,* Act IV, sc. 2.
[42] *The Royal Master,* Act I, sc. 2.
[43] *The Royal Master,* Act V, sc. 1.
[44] Act II, sc. 2.

In conformity with the teaching of the Catholic Church Shirley maintains that the best resistance to the temptations of impurity and the encroachments of concupiscence are pure and holy thoughts.

> Cherish
> Pure holy thoughts, that if your life soon end,
> Your better part may yon court ascend.[45]

7. *Hope of Reward after Death.*

As regards the fear of death which is inherent in the human race on account of the uncertainty of what follows, the teaching of the Catholic church is consoling at the hour of death in the hope of eternal reward she holds out to the dying who have lived virtuous lives in this world. She maintains, as we read in the *Book of Psalms,* that " precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints." [46] It is therefore the practice of Catholics, when there is any danger of death, to summon a priest, who has then ample time to prepare the soul to meet its Creator. The Sacrament of Extreme Unction is usually administered in such cases.

In his attitude towards death Shirley is different from the dramatists of his time. A kind of pagan philosophy, a stoic indifference towards the inevitable summons seems to prevail among them. Even Shakespeare is silent about the afterworld. " To die is but to go we know not whither," or " we are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our life is rounded with a sleep," are his thoughts on the hereafter.

Not so with Shirley. With him

[45] *The Witty Fair One,* Act IV, sc. 4. For further references to purity cf. the following: *The Gamester,* Act II, sc. 1; *Love's Cruelty,* Act IV, sc. 2; *The Brothers,* Act I, sc. 1; *Ibid.,* Act II, sc. 2; *The Grateful Servant,* Act II, sc. 1; *Ibid.,* Act III, sc. 1; *The Traitor,* Act III, sc. 3; *The Young Admiral,* Act V, sc. 2.

[46] *Ps. cxv,* 15.

> Grim death can but translate
> Me hence, and there's an end of death and fate.[47]

At the same time, however, he says

> We have a certain faith, a faith
> That can assure reward or punishment
> For deeds; we know our dwelling after death,
> Which Roman souls unlawfully did seek,
> And found too soon. We are prescribed those acts
> That make us angels.[48]

In one of his later works, Shirley shows truly Catholic sentiments when he regards death, not with fear, but with the hope of the everlasting reward for a virtuous life spent in this world.

> I have not lived
> After the rate to fear another world,
> We come from nothing into life, a time,
> We measure with a short breath and that often
> Made tedious too, with our own cares that fill it,
> Which, like so many atoms in a sun-beam,
> But crowd and justle one another. All
> From the adored purple, to the hair-cloth,
> Must centre in a shade, and they that have
> Their virtues to wait on them, bravely mock
> The rugged storms, that so much fright men here,
> When their soul's launched by death into a sea
> That's ever calm.[49]

This then is the Catholic Philosophy of Life Shirley has incorporated into his works. A glance at the principles inculcated reveals the fact that these principles constitute a compendium, or better, a synthesis, of the moral obligations in-

[47] *The Royal Master*, Act IV, sc. 1.

[48] *The Humorous Courtier*, Act II, sc. 2.

[49] *Honoria and Mammon*, Act V, sc. 2. For additional references cf. the following: *The Maid's Revenge*, Act IV, sc. 4; *The Brothers*, Act III, sc. 1; *Love's Cruelty*, Act V, sc. 2; *The Traitor*, Act IV, sc. 2; *Ibid.*, Act V, sc. 1; *The Royal Master*, Act IV, sc. 1; *St. Patrick for Ireland*, Act V, sc. 2; *Ibid.*, Act V, sc. 3; *The Humorous Courtier*, Act V, sc. 1.

cumbent upon every Catholic towards the State, towards his neighbor, and towards his God. Many more references could be cited to establish the fact that Shirley not only became a Catholic at a time when circumstances were most unfavorable, but that he also lived, and thought, and wrote as a Catholic.

Anthologies of Elizabethan poetry invariably contain, as an example of Shirley's lyric powers, the beautiful lines about "the glories of our blood and state," culled from one of his last masques, *The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses.*[50] These lines, no doubt, are beautiful and eloquently express the nothingness, the *vanitas vanitatum,* of this world's goods. But they are not typically Catholic in tone and sentiment and reveal nothing of the Catholic Philosophy of Life so pronounced at times in Shirley's works; they savor too much of the pagan philosophy of the Homeric soothsayer Calchas who utters them. A poem much more pregnant with Catholic sentiments, with that faith to which Shirley adhered so steadfastly throughout his entire life in spite of the difficulties of the times in which he lived, is contained in the collection of poems known as the *Rawlinson Manuscript,*[51] and published in the last volume of his works. It is entitled *Verses,* and will serve as a fitting conclusion to portray Shirley's thorough Catholic Philosophy of Life.

Canst thou, dear God, forgive so soon
A soul hath sinn'd so long?
Canst thou submit thyself to one,
That loads thee still with wrong?
Canst thou invite me to repent,
And woo me to return,
As if thy Godhead were destroy'd
If I in hell should burn?

Thou never wert in such distress
Of me, a barren shade,

[50] Cf. *Works,* pp. 396-397.
[51] Cf. *Works,* VI, pp. 499-515.

Nor could thy honour have been less,
Though I had ne'er been made.
Could I with all the saints compare,
Yet I were black to thee;
But more defil'd than lepers are
Whence is this love to me?

Canst thou be just in the reward
Of goodness, and of sin?
Are angels at heaven's gate a guard,
And shall I enter in?
It is no virtue of mine own,
But blood of him that died,
Our elder brother, and thy son,
Whom my sins crucified.

Strange way, by such a guiltless wave,
To wash away our crimes,
Whose least drop was enough to save
The world a thousand times!
For every crimson tear, that he
Thus shed to make me live,
Oh, wherefore, wherefore have not I
A thousand souls to give![52]

Conclusion.

I have had one definite purpose before me in gathering the materials out of which this essay has grown, namely, to demonstrate the fact of a practical Catholicism in the works of James Shirley, and the effects of this in his maturer dramas.

In pursuing this objective I first attempted a complete summary of Shirley scholarship up to the present time, in order to convince myself of the novelty of my enterprise. In this I discovered two essays of obvious import in Shirley studies, but which have been unmentioned in biographies heretofore, namely, "On the Character and Writings of James Shirley," by K. Q. X., in *The London Magazine,* Vols. I and II, 1820,

[52] *Works,* VI, p. 502.

and "St. Patrick for Ireland," by John Eglinton, [pseud. William Kirkpatrick Magee] in *Anglo-Irish Essays,* New York, 1893. In the next place I made a study of the times in which Shirley lived, and discovered, I believe, that he stood apart from his literary contemporaries in "professional" aloofness; that his resemblance to the Elizabethans is principally in externals, in content and aim he is unique; and that a third characteristic distinguishing him from the writers of his time is the serious religious tone that pervades all his plays. Thirdly, I have given a summary of his life that aspires to include all that his biographers, even to the latest researches of Prof. Baugh, have discovered. In the course of this summary I have gradually formed the hypothesis presented in detail here, that, the Grammar School of St. Albans was, at the time Shirley was active there as Head Master, in the hands of Catholic authority. Fourthly, in summarizing his works, I have given what is, I think, the first classified list of Shirley's plays according to literary *genres.* Fifthly, I have given in detail his Catholic Philosophy of Life. This I have grouped under the following seven points, four of which are specifically Catholic doctrine, while the other three may be termed Catholic from the emphasis Shirley places on them, namely:

1. Indissolubility of the marriage vow and the faithfulness of the spouses towards each other;
2. Necessity of confession to a priest for the remission of sins and the alleviation of the sin-burdened conscience;
3. Persistency and constancy of prayer;
4. Appreciation and sympathy with Catholic monachism;
5. Loyalty and obedience to civil authority;
6. Chastity and purity of womanhood;
7. Hope of reward after death.

That other writers in Shirley's period at times manifest Catholic tendencies is evident to anyone who is familiar with their works, but there is not in them that constantly recurring

Catholicism which wells up in Shirley even in the unethical conventions which enveloped the drama in his day. The persistency and consistency of this note in him is a unique characteristic, remarkable for itself in such a time, in such a country, before such a court, and calling for consideration in the next biography of him to be written. Meanwhile, it scarcely needs to be emphasized that all attempts to interpret Shirley will be incomplete which do not follow and pursue further the features of him presented in this dissertation.

I. O. G. D.

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